

Between the Lived and the Built:
Foregrounding the User in Design for the Public Realm

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Declaration:

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Signed:

Melanie Dodd

Dated:

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Books A-D Objects and Things

(Bound Separately)

- A *Benches, Tables, Grounds*
- B *Theatrics + Hospitality*
- C *Pavilions + Rooms*
- D *Media, Signage, Maps*

Appendix Projects

(Project Sheets Separately)

- Shared Ground*
- The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities*
- The Hypocaust Pavilion*
- The Horses Tale*
- What If?*
- The Well Adjusted House*
- DIY Park*
- Barking Town Square*
- What Do You Do And Where Do You Do It?*
- Making Space in Dalston*
- Villa Frankenstein*

Part One (a)

Contribution to Knowledge and Form of the Document

Introduction

1 *The Invitational Design Practice research Stream at RMIT Architecture and Design was commenced by Leon van Schaik in 1987.*

The method of this PhD, framed within the invitational design practice research stream of Architecture + Design at RMIT (1) has been a reflection on architectural practice through the design of projects. The context for the designed work has been the collaborative art and architecture practice of muf, and also the affiliated practice muf_aus, and has spanned the period from 1998 to 2010 amounting to twelve years.

The PhD was initiated in 2004, and represents a point midway through the twelve years, marked as a moment of reflection on work undertaken to date, and a consideration of the future of my practice within the collaborative frameworks of muf given the geographical separation of 12,000 miles caused by a relocation to RMIT. In this respect the process of making the PhD has been the process of making a space for practice within the mode of the practitioner-academic, and marked by the profound legacy of practice with muf. This has necessitated a number of fundamental pragmatic shifts in modes of working, particularly; the shift from practice to a full time academic position, and the shift from working within a collaborative studio to a operating as a lone practitioner.

Contribution to Knowledge

2 *From Ignasi Sola-Morales Rubio (1995) Terrain Vague in 'Anyplace' Ed Cynthia Davidson MIT Press*

The contribution to knowledge in the field is provided through a demonstration of an *expanded definition of architectural practice*. This addresses how architecture might achieve a more ambivalent positioning as a discipline, allowing it to operate at the margins beyond the 'crushing homogeneity of the city' (2). In particular, the contribution lies in:

i_a model of collaborative working, both between practitioners and stakeholders but especially with the public, which shifts the notion of authorship and questions the neutrality of our professional role as architects

ii_a consideration of the alternate roles or personas we adopt within practice which reframe ways of operating as an architect and offer opportunities for collaboration

iii_a reconsideration of the scales and products of architectural practice which are the products of these new ways of operating

iv_a redefinition of these physical products as *expanded design*; defined as the bigger matrix of connectivity between a 'thing' and its repercussions and effects extending beyond the boundaries of fixed borders and designed edges.

Readers should begin by familiarizing themselves with the practice through the separate Appendix of 'Project Sheets' and the 'User Guide' Diagram. These provide a short but comprehensive introduction to the selected projects and the necessary informational guidance on client, budget, dates and other factual details, including authorship and credits. The eleven projects are then subsequently referred to within the body of the text that follows, where relevant, to illustrate the discussion. It is important for readers to note that other muf projects, beyond the eleven outlined in this PhD, are sometimes referred to in Chapters 1-5: and where other projects are included in this way they are described in the body of the text. The principle is that the eleven projects mark the selected material for the PhD, but that other projects may illustrate points in the way that precedent projects and literature (by others) do.

The body of work undertaken across the twelve years is represented in a selective project list here of eleven projects, and is therefore characterized by the shifts and reflections introduced above. Seven of these projects have been undertaken since the beginning of the PhD in 2004, four of them by muf_aus, three by muf. The remaining four are included as evidence of the larger body of work which has been reflected upon since 1998. Consequently the work is uneven, authored in different ways and by different collections of people in different places. The projects are all real, but not always built. I am indebted to my friends and collaborators at muf, especially Liza Fior, Katherine Clarke, Juliet Bidgood and Cathy Hawley, who as founder members of muf in 1995, provided the provocative and addictive framework for practice that I discovered when I joined the practice in late 1997. This is an environment that resists the single author, but understands that 'We' is given over to multiple 'I's'. As stated in *This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual* (2001): 'On good days this is the success of muf, a collective identity which allows for individual autonomy and authorship' (muf 2001 p9). At the beginning of

Form of the Document

the process of reflection that marked the initiation of this PhD, and after six years of practice with muf, one of the questions I asked myself was how I might practice 'without' muf, or whether a second phase of practice might move beyond my experiences with muf and take an alternate form and trajectory. After two years, and through the undertaking of two projects (*What If?* 2005 and *The Well-Adjusted House* 2006) I had decided to establish an affiliated practice muf_au, based in Melbourne. This ability to be both connected and disconnected to muf has characterized a mode of practice that seems to accommodate both the 'We' and the collective 'I's' of practicing as an architect. There is, within the projects of muf_au, an autonomy from muf, but also a much more profound collectivity which I have sometimes termed 'semi-detachment'. This semi-detached quality has permeated the PhD because it has allowed me to be alternately both objective about the work of muf, as if an outsider, but also complicit in the processes as an insider: as if I have multiple 'selves'. This ability to be various distances from muf is characterized in the style of this ADR in that I sometimes discuss muf projects from the outside in the manner of objective critique, and sometimes from the inside as a self-authored and personal project. This has been a characteristic framework for my practice at a number of levels, both in terms of the collective definitions of my collaboration with muf, but also the broader collectivity and collaboration with constituencies in the worlds of projects; clients, locals, students, the public. Part of the outcome of the work, since 2004, has been a recognition and appreciation of my ambiguous role as a designer. I feel this is almost a confession of *authorial uncertainty*, but one that is positive and liberating rather than negative and questionable. I have understood these varied authorships as an integral part of the multiple 'roles' or personas that we play out in practice, and consequently these roles represent a first organizational matrix for this document.

I am also indebted to students that have joined me in design studios at RMIT since 2004. In the absence of muf colleagues on Melbourne, students have become my part time collaborators; my collective. The succession of ten design studios that I have run at RMIT have all presented me with the opportunity to experiment with a method of practice alongside a full time academic role. The possibility to conflate the two into one practice has been both

pragmatically effective but also conceptually enriching. In consequence, the first project undertaken after the commencement of the PhD - *What If?* - is a live design studio and testament to collaboration with students as one of the mechanisms for making work in this new mode. Other projects have had their beginnings, or middles, framed up as design studios, so that the process of learning has become complex; between the public, students and myself. These aspects are picked up in the role of *Educator* (see chapter below), which has become a crucial role for me both pragmatically, and conceptually.

One of the structures of the PhD has therefore been informed by an identification and definition of these ambiguous personas as a function of 'collaboration' both within practice and more broadly in projects with the public. The purpose has not been to classify these persona so as to separate them from each other. They operate synergistically within projects and practice and are hard to detach and separate completely. Never-the-less as articulated in the Muf Manual : 'We painfully discovered that collaboration is not about different disciplines and personalities climbing into a blender and producing a consensus. Rather it has to be the deliberate creation of a sufficiently generous atmosphere to make room for different disciplines and personalities, both ours and those of consultants, and friends'

The purpose in the PhD Projects since 2004 has been to identify these personas as different characteristics of designing and authorship that indicate a broader and deeper definition of architectural practice. A definition of the conventional roles of the architect has always been problematic for architects. On the headquarters of the Royal Institute of British Architects, built in 1932, a series of figurative sculptures adorn the elevation facing Weymouth Street, which separate the architect into his ancillary roles of artist, sculptor, artisan and mechanic. As Jonathan Hill notes, in such a split lies inherent the contradiction at the heart of our profession; are we professionals subject to exclusive and self-validating codes, or are we artists who are autonomous and unaccountable? (Hill 2000 p 79) In this respect the investigation of roles is about a questioning of the boundaries of architectural practice. It is about understanding that architecture's conventional definition

Roles + Persona *Chapters 1 - 5*

as a profession is different from how it is defined by others, including those who practice it, and those who use it. And it is about operating in this gap.

In Chapters 1-5 *Roles and Persona*, five personas or roles have been identified and these five roles form the five principle chapters of the PhD. These roles are deliberately diverse and unorthodox: they do not take on the conventional characteristics of the architect as a professional responsible for designing buildings. Yet they are not just behavioral traits; they are 'design' personas because they produce both actions and objects that are the products of the design practice of muf and muf_aus.

The Local is a role that addresses how we can understand and behave as designers from the point of view of the user rather than from the perspective of the architect. Being a local intervenes in the problematic gap between the perception of the architect as an expert on space, and the public as novices and introduces a slippery territory for action. Being a local means understanding as a designer that the minutia of one's own everyday life, habits and routines, normality and familiarity, are a place from which to connect with others.

The Double Agent understands and utilizes the powers of agency as an architectural design tool, and one that operates (at various times) across the apparently contradictory modes of activist, entrepreneur and enabler. The double agent behaves ambiguously across the conventional norms of the profession (client, brief, budget) and also in the cultures of resistance familiar to the outsider (provocation, controversy, anti-authoritarianism). The double agent sits on both sides of the fence.

The Educator is a role that tries to consider architectural design as a shared process of spatial and material learning undertaken with the broader constituencies involved in projects, particularly local residents, the public, students and children. The educator assumes that all of us have a 'tacit' knowledge of space and place that can be folded into processes and projects of design. The educator sees the value of an urban pedagogy that allows a broader recognition of what design could be and why it matters to society.

The Artist excels in provocation. Like the canary down the pit, the artist's behaviors reflect back to a project (and place) some of its fundamental, precise but invisible characteristics. The artist operates materially and spatially to present the ordinary and extraordinary, and the familiar as strange; a kind of alchemy or magic.

The Policy Maker is fascinated by the strategic scale of the city but acts within the concrete reality of the everyday. The policy maker is ambitious for bigger ideas for the public realm but understands the problems of abstraction, and works intimately - as a way of materializing meanings that resist fixity. The policy makers sees strategy in detail, and detail in strategy.

The five chapters above are text based and reference other writers, thinkers and practitioners to build a deeper context and background to the role, including descriptions of certain projects (both our own and others). The chapters try to define both the alter ego of the role and its operational characteristics of design.

A second subject of my reflection on practice, has been characterized by the categorization of projects themselves as physical objects and entities, particularly their small scale and often intangible outcomes. Early on, this was partly as a result of adverse public attention for muf which has always focused on the small scale as something to be decried: 'muf have still not done a building'...'the real test will come only when muf is able to realize a significant building' (The Architects Journal 25 February 1999). Before arriving at muf, as an architect in another practice, I had been immersed in projects that seemed to operate in a middle ground of scale and ambition that was the source (for me) of a certain dissatisfaction. The tyranny of domestic back extensions seemed to allow only small to moderate ideas and small to moderate scales of work, in my experience at that time. Conversely, the experience of working on projects which were both small (even tiny) but which had strategic and citywide aspiration, has had a lasting effect on my practice. *Significant*, as a word which can only be used for architects who have designed the middle and large scale, seemed too narrow minded. I would frequently joke to others that I was designing a

Objects + Things
Books A-D

‘bench’, knowing that this was not entirely true. Modesty and ambition, as micro and macro scales of practice, seemed to fit with my own desires and ways of working. Early on at muf we received an anonymous fax that had been sent to the architectural magazine Blueprint, and which was the subject of sour grapes a small feedback and comments section. Deeply sarcastic, it bemoaned the ‘magnificent achievements’ of muf, which amounted to the type of editorial ‘(or should we say hype) ‘ muf designs park bench’.

Reflecting on this at the beginning of the PhD process in 2004, it seemed to me more and more important to give value to the small, the fragmentary and the incomplete physicality of projects, as an acknowledgement of their resistance to the mainstream scale of practice, and the forces of commodification and commercialization inherent in city regeneration. To value this realm of operation, rather than disparage it, or apologise for it seemed critical. Katherine Shonfield writes of scale within muf projects in her essay ‘Premature Gratification and other Pleasures’ (muf 2001 p 14-23). Her opening sentence still holds a powerful resonance for me: ‘*How do you develop a city-wide strategy when you are fascinated by the detail of things?*’ Tracing the detail outcomes of design at muf and muf_aus has allowed an implicit grouping of these alternate typologies for the public realm. These typologies are loose, small and represent a strange combination of the physical and the performative. They do not align precisely with particular roles described in the first matrix, instead forming an overarching and alternate matrix of objects, spaces and events. The usefulness of this matrix as a way of describing the projects is that it resists the classification and representation of the projects in a linear and narrative sequence over time, instead clustering them around common ‘spaces’ and ‘things’ produced; a way of valuing their physicality, and making an alternate typology of the ‘small intending to be large’. This second organizational strand or matrix within the PhD is represented through Books A – D: *Objects and Things*.

Benches, Tables Grounds is the starting point for this collection, because these objects epitomize many projects at muf and muf_aus. This taxonomy of objects explores the conventional typologies of street furniture and public space, but from an alternate perspective. This is a language of furniture as specially made, intimate and distort-

ed, as opposed to standard, generic and off the shelf.

Theatrics and Hospitality is a typology of interventions that are about the physical props and staging of events. Evident in all projects with socially-engaged and dialogical processes, these objects – tents, masks, costumes, cakes, parades, follies – are explicitly designed, or co-designed as provocations to conversation and engagements: objects which support and catalyse collaboration and exchange.

Pavilions and Rooms are the closest grouping to what is conventionally defined as architecture; at moments they are architecture. They are therefore characterized by their close relationship to the pavilion as small, light and sometimes impermanent buildings but loaded with extended intent beyond the boundaries of their walls. This taxonomy of spaces explores how architecture can manipulate its enclosure to maximum effect.

Media, Signage, Maps are a typology of things at the very fringes of the physical. These are characterized as being within the realm of interaction or communication design, involving websites, and film, signage and notices, posters and hoardings, maps, strategies and diagrams. 'Media, Signage, Maps' are physical things which explain, orientate and provoke: like the 'how to' manual or the open-ended question, they are suggestive and curatorial in intent.

These four chapters are image based and presented as four illustrative books, comprising a visual taxonomy of the physical ingredients of the eleven selected projects from muf and muf_aus between 1998 and 2010. They are accompanied by captions and annotations, to provide a typographic mode of representing comment.

Finally, its important to end this explanation of the form of the ADR by pointing out that the organizational device of the two matrices – of multiple personas, and objects and things – is not intended as a device to divide the project outcomes into processes and products, along the same lines. Rather the opposite; it illustrates how the roles played out in practice are as much responsible for the way an object materializes, as the palette of aesthetic languages used. The ceramic benches in the *Pleasure*

Garden of the Utilities (1998) evolve from 'behaving locally', in the same way that the diorama bench in *What Do You Do and Where Do You It?* (2008 ongoing) is evidence of a policy maker considering how to act in detail. And equally the aesthetics, materials and spatiality of the objects and things are intended to have an agency, or effect through their physicality. The theatric hospitality of the cake, in *What If,?* (2005) exemplarizes a more informal exchange that welcomes the public into the closed world of regeneration and policy. And the table folly in *DIY Park* (2007-2008) becomes a mechanism for a shared process of working that both separates, and gathers together a group of children. These principles will be taken up next, through the framing of the proposition.

User Guide to Projects

In addition to the text above outlining the form of the document, and the proposition of the PhD, there is a User Guide or Diagram which locates the two matrices – 'Roles and Personas' + 'Objects and Things' – within a single drawing, also including the narrative of time and projects as a way to connect the structures for the reader.

Part One (b)

The Proposition

Between the Lived and the Built: Foregrounding the User in Design for the Public Realm

Between the built and the lived there is a domain that presents the architect with a great deal of difficulty. It is a space characterized by difference and contrast: on the one side the architect, contractor and consultants and clients responsible for building. On the other, the messy reality of everyday life as experienced by all other people who are occupants and inhabitants of the spaces they construct in perpetuity. Whilst these two domains do collide, they remain fundamentally at odds because of the distance between the two. As Jonathan Hill states:

*Hill J (1998) Occupying
Architecture: Between the
Architect and the User*

‘Architecture as defined by the profession, is different from architecture as experienced by users’ (Hill 1998 p80).

Or to put it another way, as Jeremy Till does, this is the gap between what architecture actually is and what architects want it to be. (Till 2009 p2)

How architecture might occupy this gap is the propositional framework for each design project undertaken as part of this PhD by Project. This has involved a process of overlapping the realm of the lived onto the built - this is not an exploration that is trying to undermine the domain of architecture, and consider only how architecture is occupied. Rather it is trying to find a way of allowing the lived to intrude on the built during the design process, and to disrupt architecture’s already weak disciplinary edges for mutual benefit; both for architecture, and for the user.

This proposition has evolved from a background in socially engaged design practice with muf, and muf_aus working on projects for the public realm, funded through government social policy initiatives, urban renewal, or cultural strategies. Whilst this practice utilises techniques of participation and social engagement, it does not align strongly with participatory design in the way that it is normally defined (for example, by Sanoff 2000) because it has an aesthetic and spatial ambition beyond the processes of design alone. Trying to redefine the practice, as

well as identify its constituent components has been part of the reflective content of the current document, and has coloured the projects themselves. The projects have acknowledged that cultural artifacts (including architecture) are co-made, by the people who make them and the people who use them. The roles we undertake in practice are augmented through the actions of many other players both during and after the designing process. Defining this practice, means understanding the complex reciprocity of 'give and take' that characterises this mode of operation. These slippery conditions confound any conventional definitions of expertise in terms of the professional (architect) versus the amateur (citizen) and allow a looser and questionable boundary condition for where the built ends and the lived begins, where processes and products collide. The first part of the proposition for this PhD therefore identifies the boundaries of the roles of the architect, seeking to redefine them by identifying roles and personas that extend design beyond the conventional definition of professional practice. In so doing the work has discovered moments where designing is a more mutable territory, as much about the agency of architecture and soft infrastructures of time and space, as the hard and physical infrastructures of form: an expanded definition of practice.

But the second part of the proposition also argues that the formal and physical outcomes of design are as valuable to the process of foregrounding the lived as the informal and intangible actions. In this sense the projects do not attempt to deny the physical reality of the built by prioritising only processes of the lived; rather they rely on an appreciation and revaluing of physical design and its social actions, understanding that otherwise, design will be marginalised. Therefore, configured from another direction, the proposition of the PhD also asks, *how can we revalue architecture as a social and political mechanism?*

Recent discourse from philosophies and politics of contemporary art practice (Bourriaud 1998, Ranciere 2004, Kester 2004, Bishop 2006, Papastergiadis 2006) provide valuable insight into how we might answer this question. This necessitates a short detour by way of explanation and positioning. The rise of new collaborative creative practices and relational techniques has constituted the emergence of a new mode of collective authorship. The expansion of this 'post-autonomous' form of creative art

practice provides an interesting exemplar and conundrum for architecture. The way in which art now involves the absorption of artistic practices into non-artistic practices begins to present more slippery definitions of the boundaries between disciplinary realms, especially for artists groups, collectives and collaborations that work across the realms of art, architecture, landscape architecture and installation. Thirty years after Rosalind Krauss's seminal essay *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* it can certainly be argued that there has been a dissolution of medium specificity in art and design practices such that artworks are now often evaluated as much on the quality of their social transactions as on their aesthetic value. Does this constitute a dispersal of autonomous art into social technique, and where does this leave our evaluation of the aesthetic, the material, and the formal objects that constitute the artwork? Some critics have argued, in different ways, that the frameworks for evaluation of contemporary art need to change to accommodate these questions (Kester 2004, Bishop 2006).

To return to architecture, although art practice has seemed able to move freely across the domains of collaboration, dislodging boundaries between the artwork and life, architecture and urbanism is often constrained by its' apparent necessities of regulation, organization and control. Contemporary architectural discourse has acknowledged this dilemma as critical in constraining architecture's social and political agency, enforcing disjunctions between the lived and the built (3) (Tschumi 1996, Sola-Morales Rubio 1995). It seems that in order for architecture and urban design to fully transpose its operations it needs to radically transgress its boundaries into what some have characterised as a space 'beyond', or in opposition to, the 'technocratic definition of the city'; the 'terrain vague' or the 'parafunctional'(4) (Sola Morales Rubio 1995, Papastergiadis 2006). Perhaps the world of architecture, in all its fixity and formality, makes radical transgressions not only through extended processes of collaboration, but also through the places, and means, by which it chooses to act, enabling it to become complicit in everyday cultures, rather than external and remote from them. There are certainly strong arguments that the aesthetic and spatial are profoundly important because of their ability to foreground the invisible and contested complexity of our existence. Architectural discourse has noted

3 Sola-Morales sees this terrain presenting a problem for architecture: 'striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated magic of the obsolete in the realism of efficacy'. He asks: 'How can architecture act in the terrain vague without becoming an aggressive instrument of power and abstract reason?' (Sola-Morales Rubio, 1995)

4 Papastergiadis has referred to the 'para-functional', and Sola-Morales Rubio to the 'terrain vague' as both the action and the site of transgression: 'the parafunctional uses of space reveal the instability in objectives of design processes and threaten to confuse the monofunctional designation of urban space.' (Papastergiadis 2006 p187)

the aesthetic potentiality of 'defamiliarisation', exemplified by surrealism and situationism, which has provided architecture with a formal language with which to breach the constraints of modern urbanism and 'chart the underground reverberations of the city' (5) (Vidler 1992 pxiii). The philosopher Jacques Ranciere, critical of purely social evaluations of contemporary relational art, has also recently argued that: 'the aesthetic is the ability to think contradiction' and by this measure the aesthetic aspects of artworks are predicated on the idea of autonomy; a position as one removed from instrumental rationality (Bishop citing Ranciere 2006). In this respect the physical outcomes of both artworks and architecture can operate as provocateurs, allowing us to confront darker and more complex aspects of our predicament as a society.

5 Vidler's use of the terminology 'uncanny' refers to a deliberate manipulation of estrangement which he argues allows for a 'rewriting of traditional and modernist aesthetic theory' p12

Therefore the second part of the proposition is premised on the argument that the ethical content of architectural practice that seeks to operate 'between the lived and the built' should not evolve such that the 'how' is more important than the 'what': that process should be valued over product. The aesthetic need not be subjugated in the desire for social and political agency because it inherently contains potential. The formal constituencies of projects are an ensemble of units that can be re-activated by the beholder; a type of solidification of moments of subjectivity. This concurs with other thinkers (Wittgenstein 1953, Winnicott 1970), who in various ways have claimed that the transitional spaces and things 'between' people (the network of human relations) is the real space of our consciousness and meaning. This ethical idea of extension relies on an understanding that the formal object itself, (our brains, a chair, an artwork, a building) do not inherently hold meaningful content on their own, but rather transfer meaning through their interpretation by others. In this sense, the formal object is the key to how we begin the interpretative process. Therefore we can argue this understanding of the value of the aesthetic and formal from both directions: for the value of the 'autonomous' in the aesthetic creation; and for the value of the way the 'thing' re-activates the beholder through its capacities as a transitional object.

Addressing and balancing the dialectic between the social and political interventions of the practice, and the physical objects created, is therefore at the core of the propo-

sition of *Between the Lived and the Built*. The projects become about how, in foregrounding the social and political agency of design (in order to close the gap) we utilise the formal, the spatial and the material simultaneously, however modest or transitory these built scales and forms might be. It is central to how we might allow the lived to intrude on the built, and in the process make a redefinition of the disciplinary boundaries and scales of architectural design.

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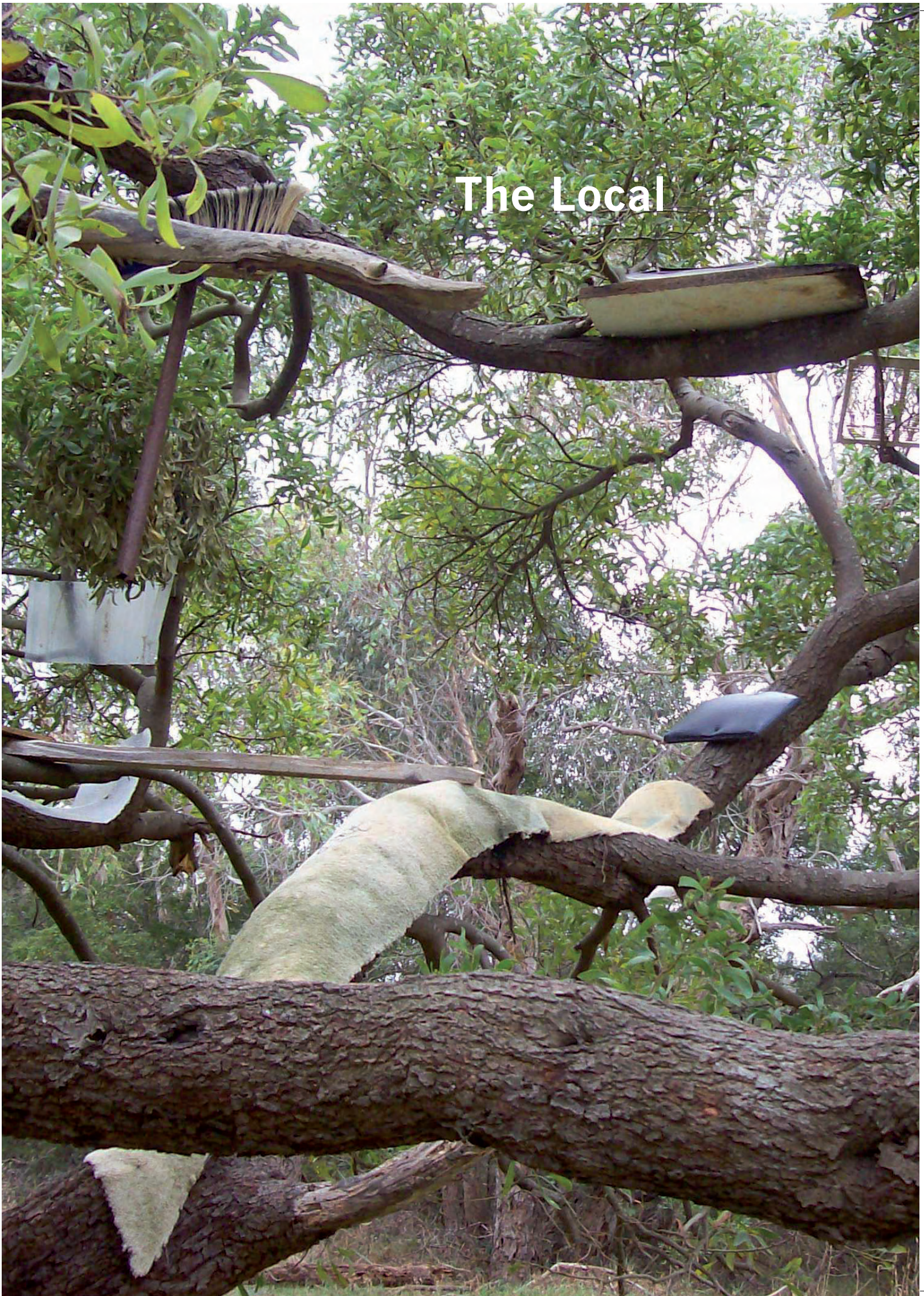
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Part Two

Roles and Persona

The Local



Being a local is a state of mind and a persona that I frequently fall into when coming to a project for the first time. Often I am not comfortable with being in the position of expertise, especially at first when it seems I have so much to learn about a place. For me, the conventionally held view of the architect as an expert on space, and the local citizen as an amateur is a simplification which has drifted out into society and taken hold, to the detriment of our shared spatial consciousness (van Schaik, 2009). All parties seem to be complicit in this view, which implies that to be a local is to be spatially unaware of the parameters and qualities of your own place, especially how they might be navigated and intervened within: being a local often implies a lack of knowledge, the binary opposite to the notion of the expert, or the specialist. A local might well be characterized as a 'jack-of-all-trades' but a master of none.

But what if the humdrum, banal and daily life of a place, and a local's knowledge of and within it, were seen as a sort of expertise or tacit know-how; a wisdom of sorts? What if the child, age 5, was as critical as the project manager, or the politician in having an understanding of how a place operates? We frequently ask these questions in projects, both rhetorically as a way of acknowledging our own limits, and literally with the public, as part of a process of engagement with site.

Perceiving the everyday, modest and fragile aspects of a place is almost impossible for an outsider, but this is rarely acknowledged in the domain of mainstream urban design and planning. Planning professionals who are in the business of making physical and built changes to places – architects, designers, engineers, local government managers – often regard site analysis as a metric task, and it is frequently commissioned to consultants such as surveyors: both the physical and the demographic variety. But local knowledge, especially of cultural conventions and social conduct, requires an interpretative approach that can understand and describe not just the human behavior, but the context of the behavior as well, such that it can become meaningful to an outsider. It may even involve recasting oneself as an 'insider' or local as the only way to cross the boundary of subjectivity: to allow one to move from the top-down to the bottom-up. However appealing it may be to attempt to classify human behaviors from above, and see them as broadly the same across different

contexts and settings, such ordering encourages abstraction and detachment from the particularities that really characterize our everyday life. Part of the role of the local is to make a deeper connection with place; a connection that may subvert and undermine the professional distance expected of the conventional designer.

Fleshing out this notion of the local as a condition, and being a local as an expanded technique or role within my practice, is the subject of this first chapter. The purpose of the wider references and definitions below is particular because of its relevance to tools, techniques and outcomes of design practice, which will be drawn out toward the close of the chapter.

Local Knowledge

Local cultural practices – in fact the culture of a place – can be seen to be profoundly relational, a complex matrix of rationale and meaning super-imposed and knotted together as ‘webs of significance’: an explication that Geertz defined as ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973 p5). Without such thick description we cannot hope to expose the invisible content of a site and allow it to be brought to bear on a proposal. In such a territory, site analysis involves a sorting out of the structures of signification and determining both their social grounding and their import:

Geertz C (1973)
The Interpretation of Culture

‘Looking at the ordinary, in places where it takes unaccustomed forms, brings out not the arbitrariness of human behavior but the degree to which its meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed’ (Geertz, 1973 p14).

Though Geertz was an anthropologist operating in and describing traditional societies, it is no less relevant to consider this idea of a thick description in terms of the notion of the local being examined in this chapter. Geertz points out (citing Gilbert Ryle and *The Thinking of Thoughts*, p vii) that the ethnographic explanation of what a particular human gesture might mean – for example the meaning and import of two boys winking – requires an extraordinarily ‘thick’ description in order to uncover the depth of meaning and intention. This thick description includes the fact that the winks, just in the first instance, are more than just physical ticks or movements of the eye, but are a means of communicating; communicating a very

particular message; comprising part of a larger social code; and hidden or discrete in their communication. The discussion goes on though to refer to the second boy's wink as a 'parody' of the first, carrying with it even more layers of intention including ridicule and conspiracy. The practice of trying to 'uncover' what might be the invisible content of meanings in a site can be seen as one of the constituents of the expanded role that attempts to 'see' as a local. It necessitates an almost forensic attention to detail, but also an ability to see, within the most obvious physical traces, a depth of meaning that is otherwise mute or silent to the outsider. The inherent content of a project can therefore begin with such glimpses, for example, the horse dung in the playground revealing the claims to landscape by horses and their gipsy owners (*A Horses Tale*, Tilbury, UK 2003-2005), or the carpet remnants nailed to a tree revealing the illicit making of cubbies (*What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It*, Hastings, Australia 2008-ongoing).

A Horses Tale, Tilbury UK
The horses in Tilbury signify a relation to place, both historic and current that falls outside the accepted order. The discovery and subsequent provision for horses in the project legitimises the presence of the horse and recognises the culture of travelling and so brings into the debate of the ordering of the public realm specific cultural values.



Other cultural practitioners have also mused upon this dilemma and formulated creative methods that might provide a substantial (and consequently messier) representation of the particularity of place. A forensic observation and cataloguing of the minutia of the everyday characterizes much of the literary work of Georges Perec, particularly his novel *Life: A Users Manual* (Perec 1987) which describes the interlinked lives contained within a Parisian apartment block, through excessive and detailed descriptions of 'things' (objects, ornaments, belongings, cultural signifiers). He goes even further in *Species of Spaces* (Perec 1997) and in a series of essays on paradigms of space (the desk, the room, the apartment, the neighborhood) offers guidance on the way in which to observe and

document the quotidian and banal, primarily through close looking, listing and cataloguing over time.

The dilemma of course is that perhaps it is only possible to 'know' the local through being a local and this bind underpins much creative practice in public spaces and places. Working on public projects, practitioners and designers who are sensitive to the position described above, resist the assumption that the professional, the outsider, the expert, should presume to 'know' what should happen, and direct their approaches toward a participatory or collaborative process of design – in the process often abdicating authorship to consensus. Actually, there are numerous commendable examples and versions of this approach, but it is a knotted and complex field of practice that veers into multiple definitions of participatory approaches more akin to community planning. A 'consensus-organizing' model (Sanoff 2000 p 3) has not been the object of our practice at muf and muf_aus. At its most humble, our approach has been simply identifying that the relevance of common human traits - for example, being somebody's mum - can allow both a common identification with others and the ability to share common grounds, as well as acknowledge differences. Part of the role of local is simply being able (within design projects) to be connected to your own local and in so doing share a common grounds with others. Projects involving children (both my own and others) – for example *Shared Ground* Southwark (1996-2000), *Well Adjusted House* Mornington Peninsula (2006), and *What Do You and Where Do You Do It* Hastings 2008-ongoing) – have all necessitated an almost amateur reliance on my experiences and behaviors as a mother, as opposed to my talents as a professional architect. Liaising with children brings out one version of the local in me - a mum – as an almost instinctive repertoire of practices that I draw on to communicate.

Related to these observations, being close to children, as locals, also provides a crucial new perspective on everyday local 'objects' because it is *things* that children frequently use to both orientate and map their environment, and to play with (Opie I + Opie P 1963). Mapping research undertaken by Jeff Bishop with children in Harwich in the 1970's (and cited by Colin Ward in the *The Child in the City*, 1978) reveals that because children are 'non-conforming users....the places where adults eyes just do not see, has

importance for the childrens' maps' and moreover that 'things that were important to children include kiosks, hoardings, public toilets and other bits of unconsidered clutter in the street' (Ward 1978 p 28).

Ward C (1978) The Child in the City

The scale and typology of things noticed by children reveal their interest in playing, and often are objects of daily life including discarded rubbish and detritus. This has become clear in the project *What Do You and Where Do You Do It* (2008 ongoing) in Hastings, when similar mapping revealed idiosyncratic and micro-scale details of urban landscapes rather than bigger more obvious conditions of place.



We might define these as objects 'at the eye level of the child' not because they are always at low level (though they often are) but because they represent a child's preoccupations as the archetypal local; a more subversive and invisible reality which is intensely detailed and intensely physical.

What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It? (2008-ongoing Hastings Australia. Children documented their own journeys and objects that they valued; the gym is a place for acrobatics.

If 'knowing' the local or 'being' the local, as an interpretive role, requires particular techniques of behavior, are there particular practices that we might look at to explain how this works? Are there any higher structures or patterns that make some sense of this deep subjectivity?

Habits and Routines

There is a significant body of discourse focused on the city that has documented the profound stability offered by everyday and ordinary repetitive rhythms, as marked by habits and routines of daily life. These are social practices that connect society, more than they mark differences. We all rise in the morning, breakfast, wash and dress, take our children to school and so on, through the day. Temporal junctions offered by food, rest, school and work are both particular to each individual and each family, but also deeply connected to underlying patterns and similarities across a place, and between places. Like common traces our spatial and temporal routes are etched and overlapping upon one another through the territory of our local environment. Some anthropologists have considered this in association with ontological practices: the sacred and the profane are closely linked through the way in which our daily lives are an actual participation in sacred origins through repetition of habits. Although that is not a focus here, one can trace in primitive society the cyclical repetitions of origin, repeated in the daily life of habits that give rationale to ritual and myth, but also fundamentally underpin the chores and errands of everyday life (Eliade 1971).

The relevance of how the ordinary might matter, is a common call, but also a frustrated one for architects and urbanists because it resists the framing and abstraction that might allow interpretation:

Vesely D (2004) *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production*

'the essence, the vitality and dynamism of life resides first and foremost in the concrete, lived and ordinary lives of its inhabitants....producing a usable analysis of this fundamental but elusive dimension of life has been a challenge for architectural thinking from Jane Jacobs to the Situationists' (Vesely 2004).

In seeking to define why habits and routines are so influential to local places, the landscape writer JB Jackson explained that a sense of place is not a physically bound experience, but is one which relates to time and the routines and repetitions that a community has in common. He saw this socio-temporal order as regulating the lives of social entities like families and organizations, constituting a powerful basis for solidarity within the group:

'What brings us together with people is not that we live

near each other, but that we share the same timetable. It is our sense of time, our sense of ritual which creates our sense of place and community” (Jackson 1994, p 160).

J B Jackson (1994) A Sense of Time A Sense of Space

In a project like *The Well Adjusted House* (Mornington Peninsula, Australia 2006) a series of periodic doodles became a starting point that recorded the daily rhythms of family life through the tidal creep of mess and belongings, from the periphery to the centre of rooms.



How to absorb the minutiae of habits and routines into design? The completed project acknowledged the difficult distance between life (repetitive and mutable) and buildings (fixed). Rather than mimic mess, the house became a series of expansions or gussets, with walls lined in hinging plywood into which the mess can periodically creep.

The Well Adjusted House (Mornington Peninsula, Australia): Studies of family life recorded through tracings of everyday objects

Of course, the social, temporal and spatial intersections of local life are hard to separate or to force into hierarchies, but understanding them as a sort of symbiotic web of concurrencies at least allows the complexity of the ordinary to be described. Some of the most memorable of tracings of ordinary lives are those mapped out in narrative, such as Jane Jacobs seminal text *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (1961) a reverie to the local, in the midst of its destruction by the rationalist planning of Moses in the New York of the 1950's. Jacobs' sidewalk ballet describes the rituals of the morning (Jacobs 1992, p 53) as a sequence of inter-related micro-movements and errands between

‘public acquaintances’. Her descriptions of the local life of her neighborhood and street are careful to define the relationships as predicated on a type of distanced trust, rather than being about close social or private bonds:

Jacobs J (1992) *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*

‘Cities are full of people, with whom, from your viewpoint or mine, or any other individuals, a certain degree of contact is useful or enjoyable, but you do not want them in your hair.’ (Jacobs ibid)

So habit and routine, where shared in a local place, provide a temporal choreography of quite trivial yet public rituals, played out in a very particular space that is neither the house, nor the workplace but somewhere in-between; a fluid realm, more or less public, from doorstep, to sidewalk, to corner shop to tram stop. Jacobs, like Jackson is somewhat dismissive of the physical components of this public in-between: “A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction” (Jacobs ibid). In Jane Jacob’s dismissal of the fixity and abstraction of the sidewalk lies the problem for the designer as local who seeks to immerse themselves in an understanding of the habits and routines characterized by constant shifts and metamorphoses. For us one answer has been to consider design beyond the physically fixed; design which takes on board a realm of theatrics and hospitality (See Books A-D). Like the tidal creep of mess in the domestic realm (*Well Adjusted House*, 2006 Mornington Peninsula, Australia) the mapping of rubbish in Kings Creek (*What Do You Do Where Do You Do It?* 2008 ongoing Hastings, Australia) or the taxonomy of detritus and occupation in the project Feral Arcadia sited on Beckton Alp in London (a project by Katherine Clarke of muf for Channel 4 Big Art, 2008-2009), ‘found’ objects become a key to the staging of events and interactions on site that transformed rubbish into objects in their own right.

Do-It-Yourself Park (Hastings Australia): Event for making cubby houses out of salvage collected from the Beckton Alp, a large spoil heap, and rubbish (left and centre).

Feral Arcadia (London): Discarded objects and rubbish collected from the Beckton Alp, a large spoil heap, were reconstructed to form precious objects for display, revaluing the found (right).



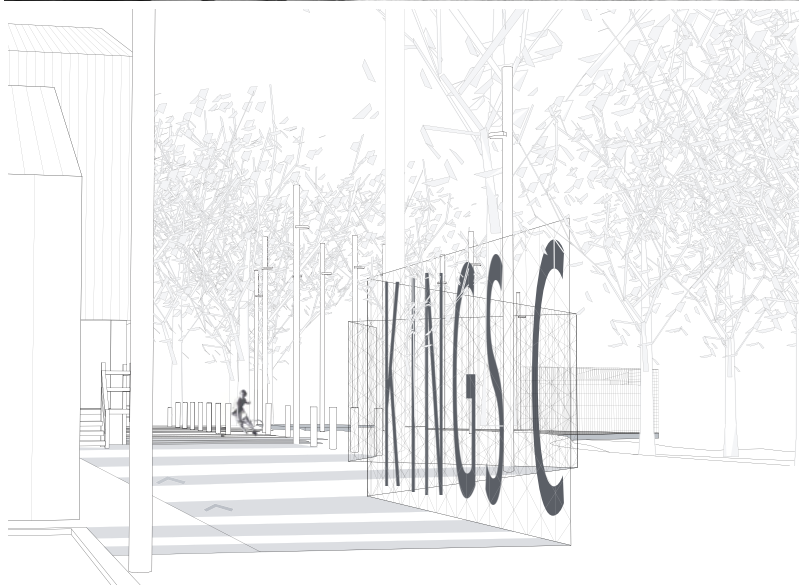
The maquettes created in both projects become subversive designs but on a micro scale, challenging the orthodoxy of 'tidying up' so prevalent in public realm projects.

In terms of a sociology of habit itself, and straying somewhat off the subject of the local, Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1980) was interested in the way that human action was regulated, because he noted that habit is structured according to patterns, yet is not the obedient product of some external structure of control. This is part of a concern that he has with 'the objectivity of the subjective' (Bourdieu *ibid* p 135) and which is a useful framework for practitioners grappling with the worlds of the lived and the built. His argument is that subjectivism alone fails to grasp the social ground that shapes consciousness, while objectivism does the opposite, failing to recognize that social reality is to some extent governed by the preconceptions that individuals make of the social world. Therefore Bourdieu's conception of human action (practice) tries to avoid reducing it to either external constraint or subjective whim. Behaviour is therefore profoundly cultural, constituted from prior learning and adaptive to future conditions, and this is his notion of habitus. So the concept of habitus suggests that habits are collective as well as individual, and that they are broadly complex in being constituted by and constituted for situations; this requires a fuller understanding of the situation to understand the habits and routines being practiced. Bourdieu's concept of habitus builds on the idea that's actors act strategically and practically, with agency, rather than being conformists adhering to external sets of rules and norms alone. Actions of improvisation are therefore crucial responses to the essential contingencies of daily life.

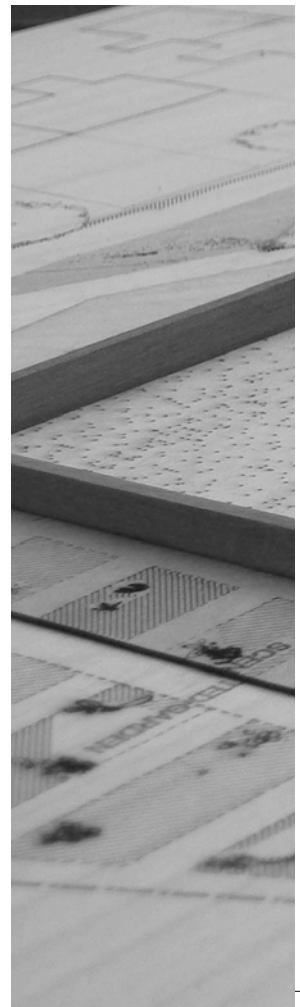
What is useful and revealing for the creative practitioner working with these definitions at least, is that habits (rituals) are not fixed and controlling but in fact work both objectively and subjectively. That is, they can be changed and tweaked: we can intervene within them as architects without erasing their subtle and fragile meanings. Sociologists have defined the way in which we might shift entrenched (and negative) habits (for example, anti-social behavior in the public realm), through operative intervention and incentive from the bottom-up, more effectively than we can forcibly alter such patterns from the top

What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It? (Hastings Australia): Undervalued and ignored areas adjacent to the creek were discovered as unofficial hang-outs for young people, like the end of this industrial shed used as a graffiti wall. The strategy identifies and makes provision for the misused and the illicit.

down (Shove 2000). This 'sociology of transition' means that by engaging closely in habits as adaptive and repetitive behaviors, we can understand how to break and reform them at a level which is closer to tweaking, or shifting the conditions rather than more violently erasing what exists. By noticing, underlining and foregrounding habits of dumping and pollution for example, we have intervened by designing environments that 'shift' behavior rather than completely eradicate it. In *What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* (Hastings, Australia) the spatial strategy focused on maintaining a degree of discretion and separation in new public spaces, allowing for teenagers illicit occupations whilst enhancing other spaces for adults and small children.

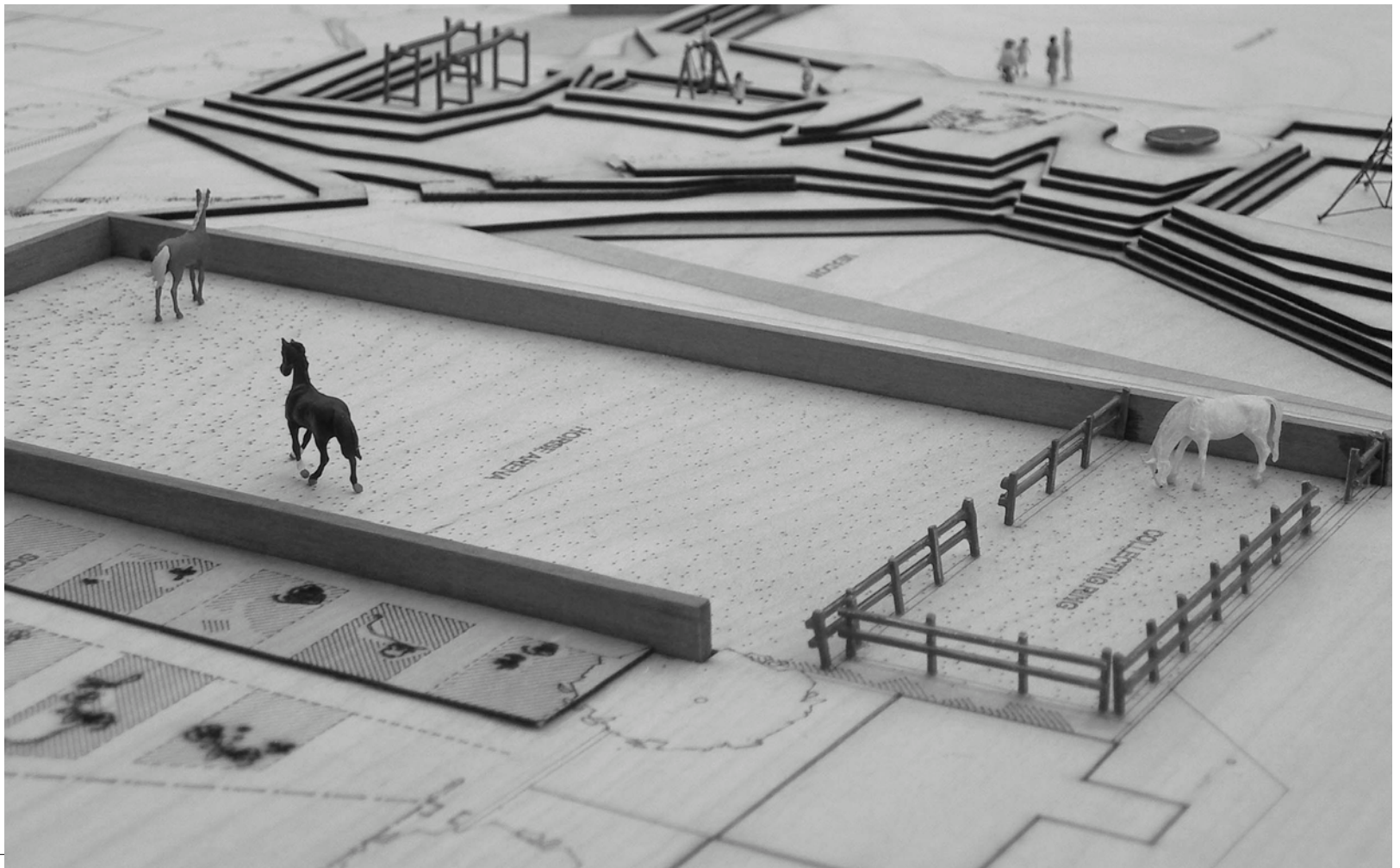


Relevant to these forms of local agency, are the 'tactics' described so eloquently by De Certeau (1998), which are ways in which we adapt and improvise to make space for ourselves within a hierarchical system, like society. In the



'The Practice of Everyday Life' he refers to the dialectical relationship between tactics and strategies; he links strategies with institutions and structures of power, while tactics are seen as a tool of the weak, utilized by individuals to create space for themselves in environments defined by strategies. He asserts that everyday life works by a process of poaching on the territory of others, recombining the rules and products that already exist in culture in a way that is influenced, but never wholly determined, by those rules and products. The potential, both to trace out habit, intervene within it, and even shift it, are all acts of local agency that have an almost subversive quality in the projects undertaken. Primary agencies which commission projects (government or public organizations concerned with renewal and regeneration of places) rarely have the capacity or opportunity to engage in sensitivity of such a local nature, in fact they are often representative of the institutional domain of strategy (referred to by De Certeau) despite their best intention to be representative of the public. Within such frameworks, noticing how routines and habits can structure more illicit and undervalued aspects of place, means that they can be absorbed into a project through a reconsideration of the brief. Consequently, the commission to design a community playground became, in actuality, a project to design a public dressage arena, because of the discovered presence of horses (*The Horses Tale*, 2003-2005 Tilbury, UK).

*A Horses Tale (Tilbury, UK):
The discovery of horses
grazing on common ground
in the landscape revealed an
ownership and use of public
space by local travelling people.
The discovery allowed the
introduction of a dressage
arena into the proposal for
an otherwise straightforward
community garden on a housing
estate.*



Likewise a 'public cubby' is absorbed into proposals that were otherwise directed toward straightforward measures like lighting to improve safety and security in a small park (*DIY Park*, 2007-2008 Mornington Peninsula, Australia). Uncovering the local in these circumstances can be the key to a more effective, accurate and tactical gestures of shifting habit in a positive direction.

Certainly, what these references to habits and routine draw out is possible ways to intervene more closely in what exists in a place. The inherent dangers of separation and objectification of places, part of the strategic realm of design, are pitfalls that divide design from the self, a most artificial construct as Cosgrove notes:

Cosgrove D (1998) *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*

'For the insider there is no clear separation of self from scene, subject from object' (Cosgrove 1998 p 19).

The authority and distance of the master plan arise from visual regimes like perspective and the aerial view and are extremely effective instrumentalities of power, enabling mass surveillance and projection. Architects and urban thinkers have of course grappled with the negativities of projection as a way to address how we might design for the everyday. According to some, a move away from the 'scenographic' in design toward a more productive engineering process requires a shift from the 'pictorial' (the visual and appearance based), to how things work, what they do and how they interact (Corner 1999). In strategic projects that make public space proposals for a large area, we have tried to avoid the tyranny of the top-down as a research device by conducting actions at the 1:1 as a way to record or 'map' the lived realm of daily life. Besides asking others to make mapping (through children's films in *What Do You Do And Where Do You Do it?* at Kings Creek, Hastings for example) we have also recorded daily journeys and routines of habit through other tools like websites and 'how to' diagrammatic representations and manuals (*DIY Park* 2007-2008 Hastings). Such representational modes avoid the tendency to treat the site as a tabula rasa to be altered by whole scale change, instead promoting the 'tweaking' of what currently exists.

Face to Face Adjacency

A pervasive aspect of the way in which local is conceived is through the a priori notion of physical contact and adjacency. Commentators on the city very often reduce its

problems to the replacement of a 'thick' local and face-to-face interaction taking place in 'small' communities, by a thinner interaction taking place at a distance (Amin Thrift 2002 p 37). This notion of the local, as implicitly adjacent, and hence embedded in the physical community, is evident in Puttnam (2001), Giddens (1998) and Harvey (1990). With the development of the capitalist economy these writers trace a progressive detachment from space (and a loss of the local), toward time. Amin and Thrift characterize this discourse as inherently pessimistic, but also static and fixed:

'The history of community is bedeviled by the idea of the collective, whose members move together and think as one, in a naturalized co-dependancy'(Amin Thrift 2002 p 41).

Amin A Thrift N (2002)
Cities: Reimagining the Urban

This seemingly inevitable fact that the global is remote, and the local is proximate, belies a more nuanced interpretation of what local might be. In fact one might see being local as a dynamic and relational structure, operating between man and his environment. An understanding of the agency of the self can include a wide "repertoire of practices" (Ansell Pearson 1999 p 171) that include not only the hand and the body, but tools, instruments and the virtual realm. This notion of an extended self, has been documented by poets, writers and psychoanalysts:

'Law makes long spokes out of the short spokes of men. Your well fenced out real estate of mind.'
William Empson

William Empson *Legal Fiction*, Collected Poems 1984

As Winnicott, the psychoanalyst notes, transitional objects and transitional phenomena belong to us as fundamental connective devices threaded back into experience, in a similar way to the notion, discussed by Wittgenstein (1953 p 141 cited by Harcourt, unpublished Lecture 2009) that words are merely marks connected back into systems of understanding:

'There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by the act of understanding. Only in the act of understanding is it meant that we are to do this. The order – why that is nothing but sounds, ink marks.' (Winnicott

Winnicott D (1970)
Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena

1953)

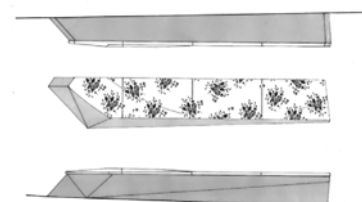
Extension is a useful conceptual framework for the practice of muf and muf_aus because it understands the matrix of connectivity between a thing (physical) and its repercussions and effects. The concept, from contemporary neurologists, that our consciousness operates well outside the sphere and containment of our own brain (Noe 2009) is also envisaged as a series of extensions which include our physical body but importantly other mechanisms and objects:

Noe A (2009) *Out of Our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain and other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*

'Just as a rake extends our reach and has the potential to extend our body schema, so language extends our capacity for thought' (2009 p 11).

The realm of extension therefore might well be seen to operate beyond the face to face and the physical local, and into a much more erratic model of connection: a connectivity which is not only characterized by the face to face contact of the conventional local but through a selection of other objects, devices and spaces of a more virtual and dispersed nature. In the case of projects catalogued in Books A-D, the fragmentary objects of design – from benches to cakes, pavilions to websites – become modes of extension that are dynamic and relational rather than fixed and proximate. The local becomes a place of connection but not one necessarily bounded by fixed borders and designed edges.

Transitional objects: modes of 'extension' that are dynamic and relational. From top: cakes as hospitality in 'What If?', Frankston, Victoria; an action map as strategy in 'DIY Park', Hastings Victoria; and a bench in 'Shared Ground' Southwark, UK and The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities





Do-It-Yourself Park (2007-2008 Hastings Australia): A table is made which mimics the plan of the park at a scale of 1:200, but also operates as a 1:1 piece of furniture for local events and workshops with local children.

These relationships between behavior, consciousness and proximity are critical to a better understanding of what it really means to feel local and act locally :

Ansell Pearson (1999)
*Germinal Life: The Difference
and Repetition of Deleuze*

'Behavior can no longer be localized in individuals conceived of as preformed homunculi; but has to be treated epigenetically as a function of complex material systems which cut across individuals and traverse organic boundaries' (Ansell Pearson 1999).

A distributed notion of local agency allows us to conceive of a role which is not required to delve physically into a static condition of community, but to understand design intervention as a connective thread which can be woven into existing, complex and mobile local systems. In practice, these speculations lend credence to an idea of design that need not provide a complete physical setting, or assume a type of 'togetherness' where community gather in one place at one time. The limitations to the static, fixed and simplistic idea of including community in design assumes this conventional model, and consequently struggles with the ambition of consensus and inclusion to achieve it. By behaving as a local, and understanding localness as having inherently transitory conditions of physical connection, design can become less 'complete' and more incremental and partial. Working with quite specific members of the community, on fleeting engagements and collaborations, as well as through quite small fragments of public space (Refer to Book *A Benches, Tables Grounds*) characterizes the work of muf and muf_aus. These accept the limits of physical proximity, and the fluid boundaries of local conditions, rather than trying to make an exhaustive participation with a whole community face-to face.

The Everyday

The notion of the 'everyday' as both a concern for art practice and architecture has been a well trodden path for critical cultural practices and writing for some time, and aspects of the definition of the local so far are of course deeply indebted to this lineage of thought and action. The concept of the 'everyday' represents a sort of crossroads for new approaches in sociology, anthropology and philosophy, which has found outlets in creative practices often on the margins of the mainstream. An interest in the ordinary man has of course been articulated since marxist dis-

course, and an understanding of the world shaped by an orientation 'from below' has had a pervasive impact that has challenged assumptions about culture and society. The term is often elusive, referring as much to 'common sense' as to the trivial; but also deeply connected to the subjective realm of experience and consciousness; in fact, many writers have characterized it as an invention of a new type of space : both physically and conceptually. The *Independant Group* (1952-55) of painters, sculptors, architects, and writers, are an early example of how this new space was envisioned via a type of antagonistic collaboration ('*This is Tomorrow*' 1956 Whitechapel Art Gallery) challenging prevailing modernist approaches and valuing an 'as found' aesthetic, more akin to mass culture.



Images from the Exhibition 'This is Tomorrow' 1956 (Whitechapel Gallery) by the Independant Group. Patio and Pavilion, by Alison and Peter Smithson, Eduardo Paolozzi and Nigel Henderson, presents the 'found' artifacts necessary for everyday life.

A comprehensive survey of the everyday, as it impacts on creative practices, is not my prime focus though it will be necessarily woven through many of the strands of the expanded roles described in the chapters ahead. In terms of the condition of local, and the role of local, the notion of the everyday is critical. The space of the quotidian and the mundane, by nature, include so much that is familiar, but not necessarily known. It is a lived experience of both spatiality and temporality combined:

'Each and everyday we make ritual gestures, we move to

Melucci A (1996) *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*

the rhythm of external cadences, we cultivate our memories, we plan for the future. And everyone else does likewise. Daily experiences are only fragments in the life of an individual, far removed from the collective events more visible to us, and distant from the great changes sweeping through our culture. Yet almost everything that is important for social life unfolds within this minute time of times, spaces, gestures, and relations. It is through this web that our sense of what we are doing is created, and in it lie dormant those energies that unleash sensational events '. (Melucci 1996 p 1)

This paradoxical dialectic of both the seemingly trivial and minute, versus the large and societal is therefore almost co-dependant in the conceptual definitions of the everyday and its importance, and is a primary force which defines the predominant scales of both the 'micro' and the 'macro' in our practice; scales which absolutely frame the physical and conceptual intent of the work. This is not a condition of the mainstream or middle ground, but one of the edges: the very small and the very large. In the muf publication *This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual*, Kath Shonfield (2002 p14) writes about the dialectical notion of detail and strategy which she uses as a framework to describe the common ground between the projects, and which characterize the scale of project interventions. The dilemma within philosophical definitions of the 'everyday' is important because it values the ordinary, a profound structure which has societal effects well beyond its modest, if not banal scale. As an example of this in another context, but similarly revealing, Steele provides a narrative of the city which traces its origins back to the consumption of food:

Steele C (2009) *Hungry City: How Food Rules Our Lives*

'Every day we inhabit spaces food has made, unconsciously repeating routine actions as old as cities themselves.' (Steele 2009: p ix).

The implications of the 'everyday' of food and its micro-practices, is integral to the shape, form and materiality of our cities. In the project *What If?* (Frankston, Australia) we engaged with the routines of the city in a literal way by opening a shop (of sorts) that took on board the quotidian rhythms of opening times, the shop window and display as devices to ask deeper questions of passers-by. The

shop became a place for an alternate high street, one with hospitality (free cakes and tea) and provocation (subversive postcards). By framing a proposal in the language of the everyday and ordinary, it has the power to operate in a transformational mode; as the familiar made strange.

*What If? (Frankston, Australia);
An installation in a shopfront for three months became an opportunity for hospitality on the high street.*



Of course, key to all of these discussions is the work of Henri Lefebvre (*The Production of Space* 1991, *The Critique of Everyday Life* 2002), who articulated and embraced everyday life and the relationship between social practices and spatial productions:

“The hyper-complexity of social space should by now be apparent, embracing as it does individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves – some interpenetrating and others in conflict”.

*Lefebvre H
The Production of
Space(1991, originally published 1974)*

His understanding of complexity in everyday practices as a spatial condition is an active repudiation of the dominant tendency to fragment understandings of space:

“Specializations divide space among them and act upon its truncated parts. We fall into the trap of treating space as space ‘in itself’ as space as such. We come to think in terms of spatiality, and so to fetishize space in a way reminiscent of the old fetishism of commodities” (1991 p 89).

Lefebvre H 1991 (ibid)

He singles out architects as amongst those who assign

space as their domain or property. The 'everyday' as a conceptual basis for other expanded roles will re-emerge in future chapters, particularly within the role of the 'artist', a condition which engage with its new definition as a means of framing creative practice.

Dialogue and Collaboration

A crucial final characteristic of local relates to the notion of a broader collective belonging, closely aligned to definitions of community. Inherent in the practice being local, therefore, are practices of communication, collaboration and dialogue with others. These are situated in aspects of adjacency, proximity, and acquaintance that characterize daily life.

These aspects become critical for describing the condition of being local, but also offer direction for the outsider and creative practitioner finding ways to intervene in the local. Art practice in particular has explored techniques for 'behaving' like a local (in temporary projects), 'becoming' a local (for longer or situated practice), or even just concerned with 'being' a local (for practice in ones own community). Examples of dialogical art fundamentally work to undermine notions of the outsider as a perceived cultural authority, and use a more empathetic identification with a local constituency to produce a form of art that challenges notions of conventional authorship. Beuy's notion of social sculpture in which : "every living person becomes a creator, sculptor, or architect of the social organism" (Rendell 2006 p 171) provides one of the first examples of how 'situated' this work seeks to become within a local condition. It is important to distinguish 'dialogical' art (as defined by Kester 2004 p 15) from community art, which means identifying it as fundamentally 'aesthetic' (as opposed to works centered on collaboratively producing work such as murals, sculptures). This is an important distinction that is frequently misunderstood in new forms of collaborative practice, although there are of course examples of slippages and crossover, including in the projects here. There is a place, on occasion, for the community art process as a way of co-visualizing or exploring the local: for example in *Shared Ground* (1996-2000 Southwark, UK), *A Horses Tale* (2003-2005 Tilbury, UK), and *DIY Park* (2007-2008 Hastings, Australia), workshops with school children have evolved pieces (drawings, masks and sculpture, films) which have

then become embedded in aspects of the final project. However, the fundamental role of a dialogical practice is to provoke a piece of work that is a proposition by an author (the practice) even if its aesthetic presence is less physical and more relational.

More precisely, the creative practices are seeking to work within the realm of the social production of space and place:

“This catalyzation of the viewer, the movement toward direct interaction, decisively shifts the locus of aesthetic meaning from the moment of creative plenitude in the solitary act of making, to a social and discursive realm of shared experience, dialogue and physical movement” (Kester 2004:55).

Kester G (2004) Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art

Clearly there are close alliances here with discourse concerning the condition of the everyday and the local as a process of ‘becoming’ rather than a static or fixed condition. These forms of practice seek to intervene, often ‘becoming’ local, in order to elucidate or foreground the invisible knowledge and expertise of a situation. This becomes a sort of surfacing of the local, through the act of intervention and this can in turn create agency or action for ongoing propositions.

Early examples of this re-orientated collaborative practice taking on the condition of local, are the *Artists Placement Group*, established in the 1970’s in the UK (Barbara Steveni, John Latham, Jeffrey Shaw, Barry Flanagan), who sought to place artists in advisory or consulting positions within organizations, as direct participants and observers in the daily life of an institution or place. Outcomes were open, but were to emerge from the involvement with others, and often consisted of video pieces, diagrams of process, and sometimes objects. In a similar way, Stephen Willats has worked as an embedded local in housing towers and projects to document the process of living in these spaces, and the micro processes of decision-making and self-reflection by residents who are normally seen as inert occupants. His repetitive engagements are a sort of ‘becoming local’ process, allowing an ever more ‘insider’ position. Conrad Atkinson used the technique of producing a weekly newspaper (1972) as a technique for being local. Using the vehicle of a publica-

tion, he researched issues, collected visual data and actually lived in the community for a year, combining his observations into a two dimensional representation which he then presents back to locals at regular intervals.

What is interesting here is that in the process of 'becoming' local, the creative practitioner operates a sort of slippery territory; as both insider and outsider. And in this paradox lies the agency of this role in practice, because it creates the capability to cross categories between different areas of knowledge. This notion will be expanded upon further within the chapter on the role of artist. However, its presence here is important because it lends precision to the definition of the role of local in my practice as one that is creative and transformational, not static and reactionary.

Conclusion

The condition of what it is to be local, in terms of the expanded roles of an architect, and as critical to contemporary notions of the everyday and the heterogeneity of social space and the city itself, are traced above through a diverse range of disciplinary discourses in geography, sociology, literature, philosophy, anthropology and even psychoanalysis; all of which speculate on the position. The references above represent the smallest glimpse into thinking in this field. But what is most important, and what has guided their inclusion, is that they can be seen to present a useful contextual framework that sits behind techniques and operations within the creative practice of muf and muf_aus.

We should return to the start of this chapter, and speculate again on the questions posed: what if the humdrum, banal and daily life of a place, and a local's knowledge of and within it, were seen as a sort of expertise or tacit know-how; a wisdom of sorts? Implicit in this question is the notion of a disruption to the traditional hierarchy between people (in a place) and those professionals acting upon them. Clearly the tacit knowledge and experience of the local can be seen as critical to my practice, and so at the heart of the practice is an answer of resounding affirmation of that rhetorical question. The 'condition' of being a local however is less important here, that the process of 'becoming' a local, because it is in these operations that the creative and collaborative work takes place,

as traced in some instances above. If we agree with the statement, then the proposition becomes one that experiments with 'how' local expertise might be valued and included in the process of the creative work, and further, what might be different about the work as a consequence.

What characterizes the matter of 'how' most clearly are the mechanisms by which 'becoming' local is an actual creative activity within the practice. Through reference to art practice and techniques of dialogical (or relational) art, aspects of most of the projects involve taking up the mantle of becoming a local through processes which vary from the self-conscious and deliberate staging of temporary events and installations, joining committees and clubs, becoming implicated in local institutions, habits and routines (a temporary teacher for example) to more mundane activities like having tea and cake. These are able to evolve because of extended time spent in the local area, and a generous period of immersion, as well as from other more banal realities like the importance of hospitality, or intimacy as a daily practice. They involve behaviors that bring me close to that of the friend, the relative, the neighbor and the mum. Very often, the role of becoming local is most effective and influential for the projects in the initial stages. It is therefore at the point of re-writing the brief that the potential for 'becoming a local' can be most useful, and creatively rewarding. Through the act of 'becoming' a local one can both access the thick description of locality, and also become tuned to the minute traces and evidence that reveal the 'local', finding in it opportunity and accuracy. Lastly, I would argue one can more readily share with the real 'local', a relevant collaborative journey.

But there is an additional way in which the practice becomes local, and that is through the aesthetic outcomes that evolve. As Katrin Bohn notes :

"material objects are both the stimulant for social interactions, and the traces of that exchange" (Bohm 2009).

Bohm K (2009) *Who Is Building What?*

The spatial and physical productions further intervene, like locals (or transitional devices of extension, see above) in the ongoing life of the place, often inducing further effects. The final creation of the dressage arena in *A Horses Tale* (Tilbury, UK) was mapped and monitored as

an ongoing process, and what emerged in terms of occupation over time was a burgeoning growth in use, not only by those residents of the estate who had formed the initial community, but by children from further a field including members of a local pony club who had no facilities of their own. Not surprisingly this created a whole new constituency of place, one that had arguably altered its trajectory from the undesirable to the desirable.

The role of becoming a local extends the conventional confines of the practice of architecture because it provokes way in which, rather than universalizing from above about generic behaviors and patterns of occupation, we can be complicit within them, provoking a deep collaboration with a place and its inhabitants. What emerges is a peculiarly precise response to situation, one that verges on the subversive, and therefore resists the generalizations of design discourses for public places.

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The Double Agent



Introduction

For some time I have been interested in the legal and ethical definitions of the architect as a professional practitioner. Rather than being about a fascination with the conventional interpretations of professional roles for its own sake, this has offered me an alternate way to read between the lines of legally defined practice – for example, in the *RIBA Workstages*, or the *Client Architect Agreement* and so forth - and help to re-define what an expanded practice might actually be. I see this as a sort of alternate or parallel reality where every traditional term and phrase might have a richer definition.

In the Symposium and Publication *Duty of Care* (Dodd, 2003), I deliberately re-engaged with the legal phrase in tort law ‘duty of care’ which is a core component within the *Codes of Conduct* for Architects. The intent was to reconsider a deeper ethical understanding of ‘care’, which rather than being simply a legal obligation to avoid foreseeable harm, might actually capture a broader understanding of architecture as a practice which entails the ‘custodianship’ of the built environment. This role as custodian should therefore carry both social and political responsibilities to communities, the city and society, as well as the more familiar technical and legal ones to avoid physical harm. I have found that re-examining an architect’s role in the professional sense offers a good opportunity to audit, comprehend and recalibrate what I actually do.

In this spirit of reappraisal, the architects’ role, as stated in the Client Architect Agreement, is to ‘act as the client’s agent for the project and as required under the selected building contract’. Reconsidering this role of ‘agent’ operating for a client, opens up a potential persona for examination in this chapter. Implicit in definitions of agency, is the capacity to act - either alone, or on behalf of another – and in such a chain of distillation one arrives at the notion of architecture as a series of ‘actions’, often in pursuit of outcomes for another party. I am using these definitions of agency to deliberately privilege an area of architectural endeavor that is often undervalued in mainstream understandings of what an architect does. Rather than ‘acting’, which can arguably be classified as a mutable and ongoing process (temporal), architects are characterized as the producers of objects and fixed buildings (spatial). It is therefore rather an irony that arguably

the most normative definition of the role of the architect, as an agent, can perhaps open out a fuller description of how architectural practice might expand well beyond the formal.

A dilemma and division in conventional understandings of architectural production - between time and space - has been the focus of significant philosophical and scholarly debate, the majority of which this chapter can only touch upon, but which is discussed at length by Massey (2005). As Massey identifies, space has often been historically conceptualized as the binary opposite of time, where the temporal is seen as active, heterogenous and mobile, and the spatial is conversely static and closed. The implications of course, have the capacity to render the spatial at a disadvantage in terms of a broader societal role, robbing it of those characteristics of dislocation (Laclau, 1990) and surprise (De Certeau 1984) that are essential in order to open it to the political, and which these (and other) writers, philosophers and practitioners have sought to address. This characteristic and richly discussed dilemma, offers the background to expand the definition of our role as architects, which I am defining as a synthesis of both actions (temporal) and outcomes (spatial/material). In the case of the current chapter, alternate or unconventional roles of acting, and how we might act as architects will be central primarily though a consideration of three modes or trajectories of action that I have identified within my projects: the activist, the entrepreneur, and the enabler.

Before beginning, it is worth pointing out that notions of 'spatial agency' in architecture has been a focus of some discourse recently (Till, Schneider 2009: p 98) and their emerging definition of architectural agency is one that:

Till + Schneider (2009)
'Beyond Discourse: Notes on
Spatial Agency', Footprint
Vol 4

'aims to shift the of focus of architectural discourse from one that is centered around the design and making of buildings to one where architecture is understood as a situated and embedded praxis conscious of and working with its social, economic and political context'.

This definition marks out a frustration with normative and one-sided ways of understanding architecture's value, and points out the problematic effects, which can fetishize

form and spatial virtuosity above all else. Their scholarship provides a valuable repositioning which is relevant to this exegesis. In the projects undertaken as part of this PhD the effort has been to specifically exercise and explore notions of architectural agency (and its social and political effects) through the design of 'things' (See also Books A-D) produced by muf and muf_aus; in other words to value both the object and the activity of designing as co-dependant.

Activism, as an intentional framework for creative practices, has a lineage that can be traced back to counter-culture movements in art in the 1960's and 1970's. Utilizing art and design in support of a 'cause' – whether social, political, economic or environmental – characterizes much dialogical or relational art practice; in fact they often seem to go hand in hand. Agitational and protest-based works were often deliberately staged outside the formal frameworks of avant-garde art practice as a critique of the complicit trajectories of institutionalized art practice, and therefore became embedded in site specific contexts, taking up issues and causes particular to constituencies of the site. (Kester 2004). The consciousness of 'community', as segments of the public alienated from high art, lead to techniques which deliberately engaged with aspects of daily life.

The activist as a creative practitioner therefore is one who uses tools and techniques of art and design production to pursue a cause, often an issue of controversy, protest or dissent, and often socio-political in subject. The implication of course is that the creative work is an act of resistance. This places the architectural activist in some conflict, as unlike the artist, the architect is bound by professional and contractual agreements and duties of care to both a client, and the public at large. In fact, this bind goes to one of the central aspects characterizing my practice and work by muf, which is the question: what is architecture's capacity for resistance? Others have pondered this problem, which raises the dilemma again of architecture's ambiguity and inherent contradiction as both an object (of control), and an activity (or enabler), and therefore the ambiguity of our own agency. In fact this is one of Tschumi's central concerns, as he defines it: the 'disjunction' between space and its use, that architecture

Activist

is 'constantly unstable, constantly on the verge of change' (Tschumi, 1996 p19). So architecture simultaneously has the capacity to be a tool of resistance, and also to be instrumentalized in the pursuit of power.

Increasingly in the last ten years there has been a burgeoning movement amongst architects motivated by social and political relevance, often described as 'design activism' (Fuad-Luke 2009). This term has been used to define a broad range of projects that seek to address humanitarian crises, whether in the developed or developing worlds. Unlike art activism, which is very often highly provocative and controversial (an act of resistance) architects often seem to address the ambiguity of their duty of care by modifying their activism to a position of pragmatic problem solving and enabling. This mode of operation is a characteristic of inherent constraints (professional obligations) in the way socially and politically motivated architecture can practice. From the point of view of design as an activity, such practice extends the orthodoxy that design is a tool for solving problems in an instrumental mode, rather than an act of resistance or subversion. This focus upon 'improvements' to society and the solving of social problems with practical and organizational solutions has largely characterized architecture's engagement with the social and political during the modern movement. In the late twentieth century design practitioners (including De Carlo 2006, Sanoff 2000) motivated by social and societal changes, developed methodologies for participation in design, as a way of addressing issues of action and agency in the act of design. Continuing with some aspects of this legacy, current movements in humanitarian architecture and design (Bell, 2004) continue to focus on the role of design as a tool of help, practically orientated toward solving problems, providing assistance in cases of need, and facilitating community consensus.

Although there is a strong theme of resistance within our projects, its form and mode is intentionally different to design activism as characterized above. I would contest that a model of activism as 'assistance' is not the only way in which designers can be activists with a positive effect on a community. We might argue that there is a gap in the examples and precedent practice in terms of how architecture can genuinely operate in an activist mode, which muf has attempted to occupy, along with others. Perhaps

as a consequence of a close association with art practice, the projects often occupy a realm of real contention and conflict with the normative activities of the architect. This mode of operation is perhaps closer to Tschumi's model of disjunction (1996), manipulating the inherent conflict between architecture as an act of resistance, and architecture as an instrumentalization of institutions of power.

Of course other practitioners operate within this definition of the architectural activist. *Stalker* are a collaboration of architects and artists established in the 1990's and based in Rome. As a radical architectural and urban research collective that grew out of the Italian student movements of the early 1990s, they took up squatting residence at the Campo Boario (the vacant site of the meat market) in Rome, and collaborated with the transient Kurdish immigrant community, local artists and students to repair the building and to organize events, including Kurdish festivals, a planning workshop and design competition for the site and other art exhibitions and performances.

Pranzo Boario, Stalker:
From 1999 - 2002, without external finance or assistance from the city administration the courtyard of Campo Boarium was transformed into a giant playground and blackboard: this large asphalt space became the place for collective games, events and the Pranzo Boario (Boario lunch, below) - a big circular dining table where Kurdish food, gypsy goulash and Japanese seaweed were served. The Campo is now the mandatory stop for all Kurd refugees passing through Europe.



For their first installation, in 1993, *Stalker* responded to the proposed demolition of an old factory, which was be-

ing used as a theatre for alternative productions, with the construction of a one kilometer long path along the river Tiber, bounded by hundreds of doors and windows from the area's demolished buildings, and sculptures by 60 artists. More recently in the project *Imaginare Corviale* (2004 ongoing) they initiated a collaborative laboratory with the residents of the infamous 1975 social housing block on the south west edge of Rome, giving rise to a series of public spaces and galleries, urban vegetable gardens, squatting facilities and a neighborhood television station.

The Project 'Imaginaire Corviale' (2004 Onwards) by Stalker is a series of interventions and actions at the Corviale, an infamous housing estate on the outskirts of Rome.



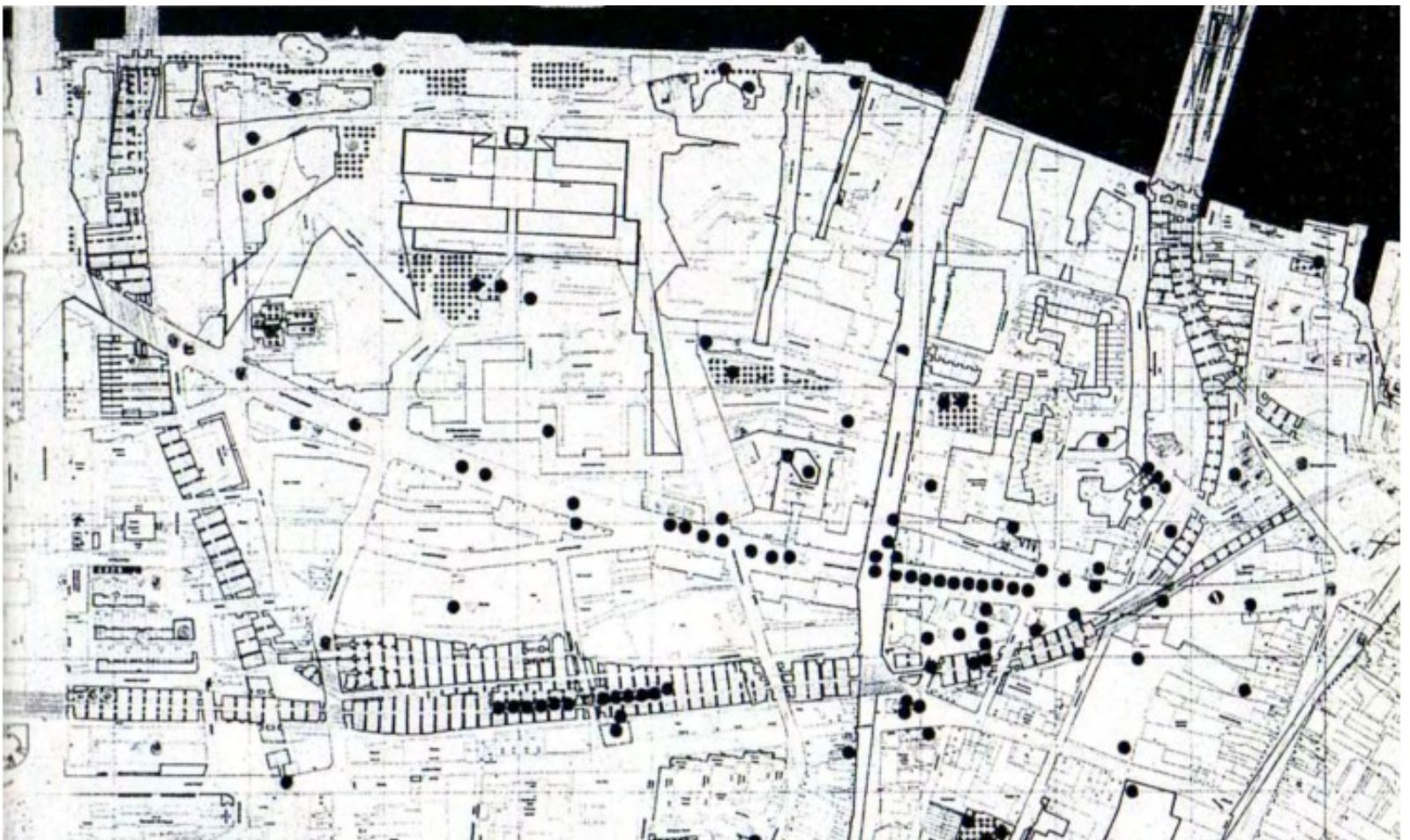
Stalker represent a model of action which almost completely rejects the mainstream and operates as a mechanism of collective resistance through all aspects of their practice. The commissions are rarely conventionally sourced, and are largely self-initiated and often not for profit. In this way they avoid being complicit or compromised in their resistance by avoiding involvement in aspects of authority, for example through means of project funding from government and social policy initiatives. Other practitioners deliberately take on board the bureaucratic realm, but they rarely profit from it, for example the Austrian collaborative art practice *Wochenklausur*. They define their practice as 'concrete interventions in the field of social policy' (*WochenKlausur* Website 1998: cited by

Kester 2004 p 98). Their *Intervention in a School* 1995-96 involved consultation and action organized around the collective rethinking of everyday spaces in school, undertaken with a class of twelve year olds. Due to the resistance of the educational bureaucracies, their individualized reconstruction of the classroom space was forced to locate its funding elsewhere and finally, be located in a gallery.

The question that emerges most clearly when looking at architectural activism is the apparent necessity for such action to step outside of conventional bureaucracies of power, the conundrum then being that its outcomes are marginalized through lack of funding and lack of any permanent outcomes. In fact the projects of muf and muf_aus represent an example of an attempt to operate within this messy bind: to both maintain aspects of genuine resistance, but to work within more conventional models of funding and project procurement.

A project which represents this clearly, and in a way a seminal one, is *Shared Ground Southwark* (1996-2000 London, UK) because it was able to some extent to perpetuate aspects of activist practice, but also operate as a design project for a local authority in a fairly conventional framework of commissioned public space.

Shared Ground Southwark, 1997: The first drawing showed our redefinition of the expanded site of Southwark Street. Each dot represents someone in the video '100 Desires for Southwark Street'.



When commissioning the project, the London Borough of Southwark (under Fred Manson, Director of Regeneration) and the Architecture Foundation deliberately allowed a level of openness in the brief, a renewal of public street-scapes approaching the Tate Modern. (In this sense part of the success was facilitated through innovative forms of procurement). The open quality allowed us to re-conceptualise the notion of the client, from the bureaucracy issuing the cheques, to the public at large. So, the desires for Southwark Street, of residents, children, developers and politicians were recorded as vox-pop interviews and edited to create a 'shared ground' where diverse and marginalized voices were heard and could be seen to co-exist. The video became a virtual manifestation of the design principles and was used frequently to articulate inclusion and resistance, whilst still allowing physical interventions and fixed design elements to be funded.

Shared Ground has represented a model for later projects, many of which utilize a parallel form of action based praxis, one which both makes space for practices of resistance, foregrounding the marginalized or undervalued, and one which simultaneously operates 'within' the institutionalized system by accepting conventional commissions and frameworks of funding. Because conventional definitions of 'public space' (streets, squares, parks) are where contemporary government often places its' funding, it requires architects to work almost subversively within this system to find the real public realm. Planning policy often understands public space as to be filled not seeing that it is a place that needs to be found. This simultaneously subversive, yet complicit behavior, has been characterized by Liza Fior, partner of muf, as being a sort of 'double agency' and perhaps this is the most accurate definition of how architectural activism might be construed within the projects and indeed as a broader model.

Other writers and architectural critics have made observations on this tendency of younger and emerging architects to engage with a new paradigm in social and political action, whilst juggling the institutions and compromises of global capitalism. Lucy Bullivant, in her introductory essay to the book 'Anglophiles' (2006) (which includes a chapter on the work of muf) comments on the tendency of UK emerging architects to use their practice to stake out fresh terms for urban renewal that can sustain themselves in

the bureaucratic system, but also allow them to maintain an independent ethos of community. She also sees this as traversing a gap between mainstream conventions and practices of resistance:

'Younger architects are making the shift to an increasingly market lead economy, and their territory is global capitalisms impact on local communities where architecture can be a tool to stake out the existing, and the fragile of a locale' (2006, p 30).

Bullivant L (2006)
Anglo Files: UK Architecture's
Rising Generation

Both defined by ourselves, and practiced by others, the persona of the double agent is a model of action in the service of architectural activism, and one that targets the central dilemma of disjunction in architectural praxis.

Often characterized as being in the service of capitalism, the role of the entrepreneur may seem at first to be at odds with aspects of agency within the projects. It certainly might appear to be quite contrary to the role of the activist, described above; someone actively resisting the instrumentalities of production. In fact the conclusions drawn out that characterize architectural agency as a type of double agency provide us with the framework to discuss the flip side. If activism keeps the forces of capitalist re-organization out, then entrepreneurship includes them as a critical mechanism of its agency.

Entrepreneur

According to dictionary definitions, an entrepreneur is a person who has possession of an enterprise, or idea and assumes accountability for the risks and outcomes. So the entrepreneur is a term applied to a type of personality who is willing to take upon him or herself a new venture and accepts full responsibility for the outcome. The term takes us to a nexus of *risk* in the pursuit of *opportunity*. Of course the conventional prefix to this is that the domain of action is financial, hence financial risk in the pursuit of financial opportunity. But the terminology has been equally applied to other modes of capital, beyond the financial, and indeed the concept of an entrepreneur often extends into a generalized term for a person who makes things happen; a catalyst and a 'do-er'.

Pierre Bourdieu provided a useful discussion, which is relevant to these definitions, acknowledging other types of capital, beyond the economic. He defined cultural capital and social capital as ‘accumulations’ of history and the social world, in the way that financial capital is an accumulation of money. In particular, Bourdieu defined social capital as:

Bourdieu, P (1986) ‘The Forms of Capital’

‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition’ (Bourdieu in Richardson, 1986 p248).

He argued that social networks are not a natural given and must be constructed through investment strategies. So one might define the social entrepreneur as someone in pursuit of social opportunity through an investment in social networks and connective social networks.

To return to architecture and agency, we have found entrepreneurial actions to be a useful tool to utilize within practice. Entrepreneurial principles – to create, organize and manage a venture with inherent risk – are undoubtedly familiar to all practicing architects with an ambition to be ‘custodians’ of our built environment. The venture of making relevant and provocative architecture requires us all to be speculative, and rather than the accumulation of finance, I refer here to a successful, engaging and well-occupied building or space as the *cultural* accumulation that arises from ambitious practice. As architects, we might all recognize our actions as a form of cultural entrepreneurship.

In projects and practice at muf, the notion of the entrepreneur first emerged through an early project for the *Local Zone* (1998) of the Millenium Dome, sited on the Greenwich Peninsula in London, and from which we were eventually sacked. We won the commission to design the zone through limited competition, and in the original pitch we stated that we would spend the budget on ‘making a difference’. In fact the project was a critique of the Dome as a singular object, and we developed a strategy to actually spend a large proportion of the budget outside the Dome in small spaces and places around Britain. The clients for

these projects would be ‘social entrepreneurs’ identified by the *Scarman Trust* (6), an organization which identified and championed individuals working within communities to make change. These projects would be brought back into the Dome (as films, prototype fragments, recordings) to form a combined landscape from different locales that would explore the premise of ‘the everyday made amazing’. The client faltered as the reality of the project took hold, and the ‘wow’ factor became blurred. Nevertheless it was through the Dome that we met Matthew Pike of the *Scarman Trust*, and others working in radical community politics. When we were sacked we continued working with these people because we wanted to find out if the profession could really make a difference: to question the role of the ‘professional’ in community generated initiatives, and to see what could be brought to architecture and design through this notion of the social entrepreneur.

6 Originally known as the Charter 88 Trust, the Scarman Trust was set up in 1991 to encourage a ‘bottom up’ approach to democracy and was rooted in the constitutional reform movement. Lord Scarman was its first chair and guiding inspiration, following the Brixton Riots. The Scarman Trust invested small sums of money and mentoring assistance in ‘can-do-ers’, people who act as a catalyst and mobilize people for positive and concrete change.

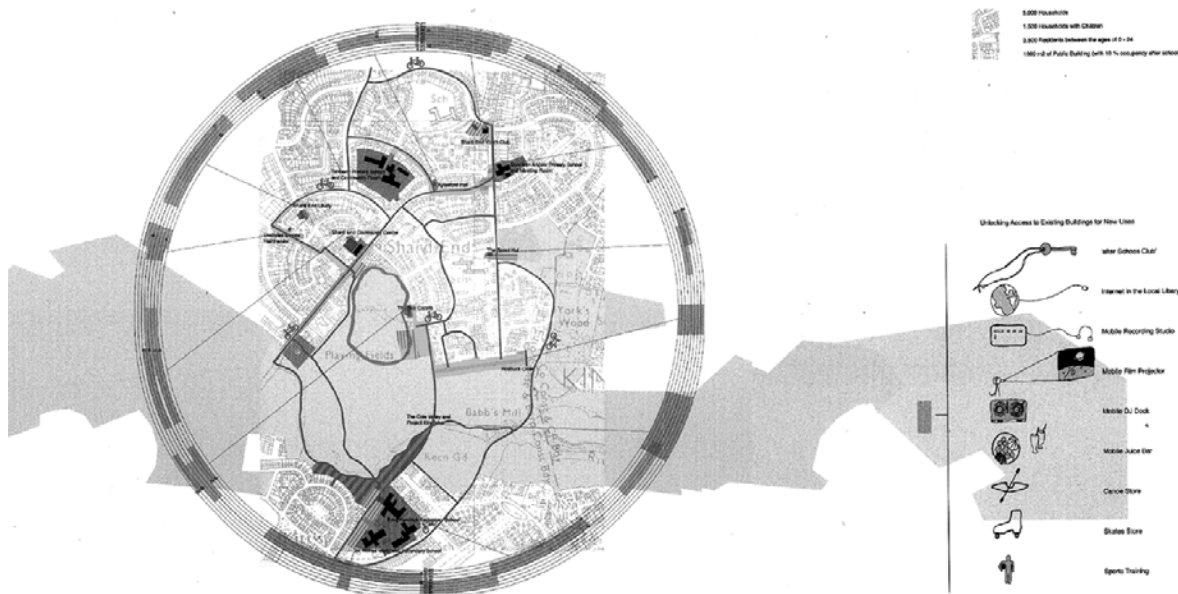
As stated in the muf publication, the *Scarman Trust* partnership was therefore ‘a critique allowing it-self to be read as a proposal’. We collaborated with three ‘Can Do’ winners within local communities, all of whom had successfully pitched their own project as social entrepreneurs trying to make a difference in their local place. Our collaboration consisted of something closer to mentoring than conventional architectural services. For example we started working with Daniel Rogan, of Shard End near Bromford, who said the following:

‘There always seem to be some problems that never get sorted out. So I wanted to try and solve one of the problems – that when kids are bored and not doing something, they usually end up doing something dangerous or against the law’. (Daniel Shard)

Daniel Shard, Scarman Trust Award Winner, Shard End Birmingham, UK 1998

Using Daniel’s photographs of unofficial hangouts, we mapped existing official provision for young people in Shard End. A drawing was made to show the potential for connecting spaces as an open network of shifting activities. Proposals became about changing opening times, provision of mobile facilities and so on to enable an alternate set of places to go. The project became the *Restless Youth Club*, a series of propositional diagrams for facilities and resources for youth in Shard End; less about hard infrastructure of buildings, and more about the soft infra-

structures of timetabling, organization, enabling. These 'how-to' templates revealed what it would take to achieve specific changes if funding and support could be leveraged, and in the process were a tool of persuasion. In the language of entrepreneurship, they were the means of selling the idea. Developing the brief of the project, the idea of the project, was the key to the making of the project.



The Restless Youth Club (1998), Shard End, UK: In response to the places Daniel described and his desire to initiate change, we made a map of unofficial territories occupied by young people in Shard End. To this we added official spaces and made an inventory of accessibility by time on a 24 hour basis - shown by the circular ring. The proposal aims to show the potential for these spaces to be connected as an open framework of shifting activities, where opening hours and mobile facilities could augment and provide more focused provision.

Each of the *Scarman Trust* collaborations offered an alternative to conventional models of local authority service provision, because they provided an entrepreneurial model of agency which combined the grass-roots knowledge, vision and determination of the local, with the speculative and transformational skills of the architect-designer. Recognizing a social problem, entrepreneurial principles were embraced to create, organize and manage a venture for social change, where performance could be measured as a combination of conventional economic value – the achievement of funding (for community profit) - as well as other benefits, including social and cultural capital (human relations, identity, cohesion).

Harnessing and valuing entrepreneurial skills for social and cultural addresses the root of the ambivalence of the architect's existence, caught between a profession and art, the client and society. Some recent commentators have claimed that re-inventing a role as a type of social and cul-

tural entrepreneur is essential for architects to:

‘(architects need to) redefine their role, transform themselves from extremely competent execution of assignments, into entrepreneurs and producers’.

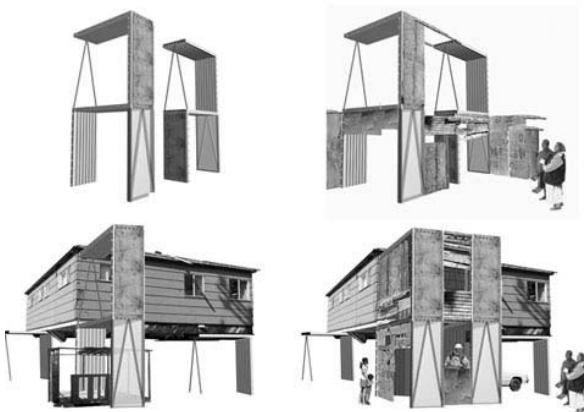
This rationale is at the root of, for example, the notion of unsolicited architecture a phrase conceived by Volume Magazine and Ole Bouman in an Issue of that title in 2007 who argue that architecture needs to ‘go beyond itself’ in order to fulfil and reclaim its professional autonomy as a social art. The creation of a space for architecture as a more comprehensive practice, and one that enlarges the field of play, relies on a proactive and enterprising mode of operation. This mode uses ‘invention’ or conjectural thinking to be concerned not just with the necessary, but with the contingent – how things might be (Shamiyeh in Volume Magazine, #14, 2007 pp22-25).

Teddy Cruz in Southern California (Estudio Teddy Cruz) and Alejandro Aravena in Chile (Elemental) are both contemporary examples of architects extending their roles well beyond the architectural mainstream, through close attention to the issues and problems of inequity and poverty in the global south. Like practitioners before them (for example, John Turner, 1976) their architectural ‘agency’ or ‘operations’ move beyond humanitarianism or design activism, into active politics, through a critique of mainstream practices of building procurement.

Oosterman in Volume Magazine, #14 2007, p 2-3

*Images below:
Visualisations of architectural adaptations by Estudio Teddy Cruz (left). Resourceful Tijuana salvages building materials from the dismantled suburbs of San Diego. Studying the negative spaces and positive energy of these temporary structures, Cruz adapts the style and ethos of these “informal architects” to new building projects for lower-income people in US and Mexican communities.*

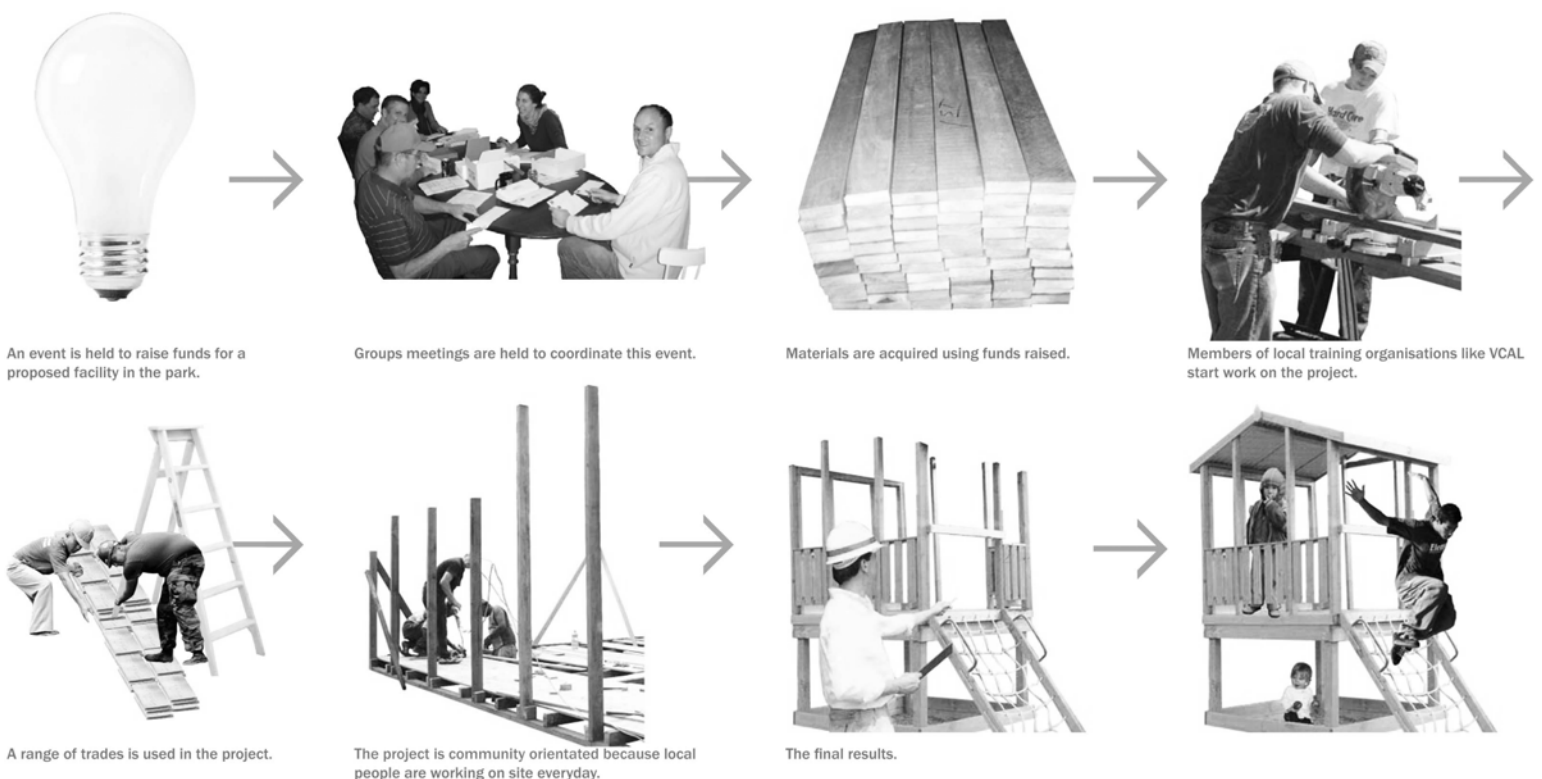
‘Half’ Housing at Quinta Monroy (right), by Alejandro Aravena and Elemental, a ‘Do-Tank’. Situated in Iquique, Chile, and completed in 2004, the development includes 93 houses. In order to trigger a relevant qualitative leap-forward, Elemental believes the projects must be built under the same market and policy conditions than any other, working to achieve “more with the same”. The practice constructs half a house and makes the conditions available for the resident to complete the build to their own requirements.



An engagement with the legal forces which shape space: land value and taxes, leasehold and tenancy laws; construction and building law; and local street bye-laws allows creative adaptations or ‘opportunism’ which consolidates the actions of the shanty or barrio dweller (Dodd, 2009). Visionary in terms of its ability to unlock opportunities at the largest scale of urbanism, the architectural manifestations often emulate the self-built and do-it-yourself aesthetic (or in fact are self-built). In this work the border between the designer, and the city dweller becomes an explicit and visualized aesthetic threshold (exemplified by Elemental’s ‘half-house’) that draw attention to the dilemma and paradox of this form of social and architectural entrepreneurialism. In such a comprehensive reconsideration of the architects’ role, do aesthetics lose their relevance? And how can we reclaim them?

Strongly entrepreneurial in intent, the creative ‘what if’ hypothesis, has been at the core of projects in muf from its inception, and continue to be a key way for us to think ‘opportunistically’ about situations encountered – for example in Frankston in 2005 with the project What If?, that used the open ended question to direct a public engagement program in a shop-front. Similarly, the propositions for the public realm on Melbourne’s fringe in the township of Hastings (*DIY Park* 2007-2008 and *What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* 2008-ongoing) carried with them the dilemma of funding from the very outset.

Do-It-Yourself Park, Hastings
Instructional montage illustrating the principles of the DIY Kit of Parts. Tenants are required to form an association to decide on parts, and raise the funds and assemble a volunteer team.



Inventing a project requires conjuring the financial and practical means to implement it. 'Do It Yourself' Park was a tongue in cheek but pragmatic response to a project with no public funding, that considered micro-incremental gestures (new gates, fences, follies) and a means of community fund-raising matching existing examples by local groups, including Lions Club, Scouts and Rotary. Although core aspects of delivery relied on financial entrepreneurial models to raise portions of budget, the proposition also utilized in-kind resources of local labour force including volunteer, training and apprenticeship opportunities provided by VCAL (Victorian Certificate Active Learning). Ironically, these local education schemes actually required small construction and landscape projects upon which to 'train' apprentices and school leavers, so that the confluence of the project design as a do-it-yourself framework of implementation, and the communities apprenticeship requirements for projects, were dovetailed in the strategic intent.

Historically, others have understood and valued the skills of the entrepreneur in the service of social gain. From Robert Owen and New Lanark, to Andrew Mawson at the Bromley by Bow Centre (Mawson, 2008), the social enterprise model has sought to make win-win outcomes. The value of this approach for the architect in particular derives from the creative potential of an expanded field of operation, where transformational outcomes can harness 'risk' in the service of invention, to allow things to happen that might extend well beyond the conventional – not just in terms of formal and spatial outcomes, but also operational innovations. This notion of innovation and transformation in forms of practice and the boundaries of practice very much encapsulates the realm in which we work.

If the role of the activist and the entrepreneur represent architectural agency as flip sides of the same coin, then the notion of the enabler provides the common ground between these modes of operation, and is a deeply familiar role that I encounter in almost every day of practice. Of all definitions of agency, enabling is one is often characterized as the most self-effacing or neutral in tone. Till's definition of agency is apt:

Enabler

Till J + Schneider T *Spatial Agency* (forthcoming)

'the agent is one who effects change through the empowerment of others' (Till, Schneider, 2009 p 97)

Yet this notion of neutrality – of being in service through an enabling role - carries with it profoundly political dimensions, and has the potential to be a creative role despite its apparently modest persona. The notion of service within architectural education and practice is a well-established tradition in the USA, and Davidoff's vision of 'advocacy planning' in 1965 (Davidoff, 1965) represents an early definition of how city designers should be advocates for the poor and powerless within the community, as a counter to wealthy elites who succeed in driving their own agendas through powerful consortiums and groups. He argued that different groups in society have different interests, and this would result in fundamentally different outcomes, if these values were somehow represented:

Davidoff, P (1965) 'Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning'

'Appropriate planning action cannot be prescribed from a position of value neutrality, for prescriptions are based on desired objectives' (Davidoff, 1965 p 424)

This model of advocacy profoundly influenced practitioners of the 1960's and 1970's who wanted to meet the needs of under represented groups.

As a pluralist, humanistic and grassroots approach, advocacy touches on political notions of environmental justice, inclusion and empowerment, developed further in Arnstein's 'ladder' of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) . But Arnstein exposes the difficulties and pitfalls of inclusive processes, where lip service is paid to consultation with others. This territory is one in which many claims are made, but which is slippery and elusive in terms of genuine and measurable effect. We have certainly experienced 'consultation fatigue, and the act of 'consultation' has become a much-over-used and misused term within the political processes of government regeneration strategies in the last ten years. Its presence is a characteristic of almost every project I undertake. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation places 'manipulation' at the bottom of the ladder and 'citizen control' at the top, with consultation occupying a central position. Revealingly, 'placation' appears above consultation and so consultation can often be seen as a mechanism by which to get support from the

citizen for actions that have already been decided by those in power. An ambition for real participatory involvement in design projects for the public realm is further complicated by the specialist nature of an architect's knowledge and skills. As soon as architects are defined as 'professional' they become representative of the class in power, often adopting an elite and isolated position on the side of the 'client' (funding body) rather than on the side of the user (De Carlo, 1969).

The issues of advocacy and enabling are plagued with fundamental political dilemmas that drift inexorably into broader realms of societal equity, and fall outside even the broadest definition of architectural praxis. These will be re-visited in later chapters through the role of policy-maker and the role of educator. But radical political commentators demand power, not plans, and see advocacy and consultative approaches to planning and city design as unwitting dupes of the system (Fox Pixen, 1965). Avoiding this bind has characterized my practice in the public realm, although it represents a familiar and loaded backdrop to projects undertaken. Often it is better to withdraw from the overtly political within this role, and adopt a more pragmatic and everyday form of agency, focused upon getting things done. The role of the enabler, like a facilitator, is essentially the role of making progress easier. Equally, the definition of facilitator is someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to plan to achieve them without taking a particular position in the discussion. Projects like *Do-It-Yourself Park* (2007-2008 Hastings, Australia) became orientated around inventing a new role of 'facilitator' where the strategic brief of incremental 'DIY' proposals also requires somebody to drive an implementation process that assists local residents; *do-it-yourself* (7) as a facilitated or mediated mode of propositional design. Throughout each project there have been an overlapping series of people taking on aspects of this role – from community development workers, to project officers, to place managers – and this is a good example of the diverse types of skill required. What is common to every one of these projects however is the fact that it has often reverted to ourselves, as designers, to really operate effectively as intermediaries between people, and their environment, and that this is a 'service' for the public realm which goes far beyond an architectural definition of project administration and into

7 Other practitioners have developed models of self-build, and DIY as strategies which empower the user, a notable example being Walter Segal in the UK (1907-1985). Segal devised a simple and innovative method of construction that had truly radical implications. Removing the need for professional building trades, it empowered people to build their own homes and gave them a vital stake in the creation of their own communities.

one of custodian or curator of the public realm.

Other architectural practitioners have seen this specifically as an almost forensic task of 'service' on behalf of the broader site and its occupants. The French architect *Patrick Bouchain* believes the architect must create an analysis of the law, and all the interstitial spaces of the law, to create new rights and opportunities for people (Trogal, Vardy 2009). Bouchain is an architect who designs situations as much as he designs buildings, taking on a number of other roles including that of developer, political advisor, site manager, fundraiser and performer. Most of his projects begin with establishing a network of interested people, collaborators, residents, local government officials, neighborhood groups etc. Once this network is in place, the site is activated socially, usually through opening a small space that functions as a restaurant, site office and consultation area where passers-by and interested people can find out about the project, give their views, or simply watch a film. This initial phase creates relationships between the architects, builders and local people and creates uses for the site before anything permanent is built. With a background in theatre, circuses and urban festivals Bouchain approaches architecture as event, creating maximum impact through a mixture of illusion, clever use of materials and innovative programming. Collaborations play a large role in this type of alternative urban planning, and Bouchain has worked with the artists Daniel Buren and Claes Oldenburg. Bouchain's collaboration with the French activist design practice *EXYST* has resulted not only in an innovative 'occupied' pavilion for the 2008 Architecture Biennale in Venice, but has gone on to inspire *muf*'s collaborations with *EXYST* in *Making Space in Dalston* (a spatial

Projects by EXYST, the french collaborative group. The French pavilion at the 2006 Venice Biennale (right). In the Biennial's over-mediatised context, where the representation of architecture takes the place of architecture itself, Bouchain and EXYST created the 'Metavilla' project. With its kitchen, hotel, sauna and miniature swimming pool on the roof, the French pavilion was transformed into a place of exchange, a meeting point, where architecture was inhabited and where visitors became active participants. The Metavilla had changed the concept of the pavilion and introduced new ideas idea of exhibiting architecture.

The Dalston Mill, with muf. A temporary construction for the summer of 2009 involving a wheatfield and wind-powered oven on the Dalston Eastern Curve, a key site on Kingsland Road, Dalston.



and cultural strategy for Dalston, East London, 2010 - see also Chapter 5 The Policy Maker) Here EXYST have worked with muf's 'micro-projects' to curate public space through installations including a wheatfield, a windmill and a barn.

This methodology of facilitation (or enabling) as a type of curation is probably one of the most useful and precise ways to articulate an agency that is neither mute, nor authorless. One of the earliest commissions at muf in 1996 was the project 'WIDE' which took on an overtly curatorial approach to public realm improvements in Hackney and South Shoreditch. Rather than design a series of proposals ourselves, we commissioned a range of artists – including *Adam Chodzko*, *Rut Blees Luxemburg*, *David Shrigley*, *Katherine Clarke* and *Alnoor Dewish* - and each were assigned to a project officer within council (highways, education, street cleaning etc). The antagonistic debates allowed outcomes that, rather than being predetermined or designed, could sustain a number of interpretations, and could also work between the idea of value as both the provision of practical need and a space for imaginary pleasures. Examples of work included Shrigleys *Special Rubbish* which were street interventions for the street cleaning department and included cigarette butts at four times their original size to be distributed in the same section of Hoxton Street over a two month period. *Caliban Towers I+II* by Luxemburg was an illuminated image of a local high rise photographed at night showing the glowing interiors of each flat, and permanently located under the Old Street Viaduct.

These projects open up the capacity for the 'enabler' to have a curatorial methodology that allows intent and direction to enter into the agency of what might otherwise be characterized as neutral assistance. This is a useful distinction because it acknowledges and avoids the dilemma of advocacy (and the charged politics of the compromised intermediary) moving beyond it into a role where enabling is a realm of creative invention.

The triumvirate of activist, entrepreneur and enabler are characterized by frequent overlaps, but they all provide a useful way to delve more accurately into what architectural agency might be, and how it might operate in our practice.

Conclusion



These explorations are not new, though they do represent a burgeoning set of practices that design commentators have remarked upon as a way of interpreting design that is moving away from products towards services and strategies. For example Landry shifts the focus of design from results, to the processes that bring them about (Landry 2000) when he describes the need for the contemporary city to focus on soft infrastructures rather than hard infrastructures. He describes hard infrastructure as buildings, institutions and physical aspects of transport and engineering which allow the city to function, whereas soft infrastructures are systems of social networks and human interactions which underpin how things actually happen.

Similarly Kaliski (Kaliski J, Crawford M, Chase J, 2008) describes the difficulties of designing the city and are critical of city planning as the crystallization of the richness of lived experience, into the static and fixed:

Kaliski J, Crawford M, Chase J (2008) *Everyday Urbanism*
Monnacelli Press, CA

‘Whether willfully rejecting the past, or blindly denying the present, both Koolhaas and the New Urbanists respectively develop an urban design of architectural fixity that ultimately homogenizes the collective everyday. The architecture of the city is consumed rather than inhabited’ (2008, p 102).

Despite this critique, they see potential in the activities of the architect who, rather than having the birds eye overview of the urban designer, are interested in a world of specific actions and things. In this sense they see a ‘city of tactics’ as an accretion of architectural acts and a place of continuous creation. This might be envisioned as enabling at the scale of the city.

To return to the dilemma posed at the start of this chapter, concerning the disjunction in architecture between space and use, these modes of action have been developed within muf as modes of praxis which cross the boundary (into the temporal) but which maintain a strong ambition toward the spatial. Rather than surrendering authorship (control) in the process of agency, the ambition is to allow both to be in play; indeed to allow a strong spatiality and materiality into architectural agency through a directed (curated) enabling. By a constant manipulation of the complicit aspects of the project (spatiality,

fixity) and the subversive aspects (resistance, temporality) perhaps double agency offers a model of operating within architecture's fundamental dilemma.

The most recent example of this is offered in the curation of the British Pavilion for the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale. For nine months of the year the Giardini of the Venice Biennale site are in a cyclically abandoned state, isolated from Venice and unused by its population. The muf Pavilion took on this dilemma and attempted to make a place that would draw out and consolidate the ongoing relationship between Venice and Britain, exemplified by John Ruskin with 'The Stones of Venice' (Ruskin, 1960).

Villa Frankenstein, British Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2010. A 1:10 scale model of the 2012 Olympic Stadium repurposed as a Drawing Studio for 'close-looking', and a 1:1 fragment of Venetian Salt Marsh by the Venice in Peril Association and Venetian environmentalists.



The Villa was an attempt to make the British Pavilion a contemporary platform for two-way traffic whilst revealing longer histories of close looking and observation of the city in history. The design exploited the three months of the Biennale and the five months of preparation as an opportunity for knowledge, sharing and expansive research, simply by making it available and by furnishing a series of prompts. The ambition was for Venice to *take advantage of* the British Pavilion. The contributors and contents of the Pavilion represented a range of constituencies including the Ruskin Archive in Lancaster (UK) as well as the scholar Wolfgang Scheppe's research into the photographic work by Alvio Gavignin, an archive of photographs which depict every day Venice in the twentieth century. Other contribu-

tors include the Venice in Peril Trust and Italian environmentalist Jane De Mosco who, with her team, contributed a 1:1 recreation of the fragile salt marsh upon which Venice is constructed. It was intended that the space played host to a series of physical ‘conversations’ between marginalized groups within Venice. In such a way, the Pavilion attempted to (conceptually) reach beyond its building line and contrive ways to breach the Giardini boundary. The Stadium of Close Looking – its bulk pressed into the confines of the Palm Court – was an accurate 1:10 Scale Model of the London Olympic Stadium repurposed as a drawing studio and constructed by the Venetian Master Joiners, Spazio Legno. After the Show is dissembled the Studio will be re-housed permanently in a Venetian School.

The pavilion represents architecture as agency but also (simultaneously) as a physical thing. In this way, the projects utilize the notion of an extended building as a space which stretches its influences beyond the edges of the physical, via reflections, reuses, temporary and permanent lives and futures, views, imports, fragments, hosting and hospitality. What is brought in is also taken out again. The pavilions, like other public realm projects described, are a process - where observation and action is a proposition, and the details of materiality carry in them a strategy for use and misuse.

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The Educator



At a first glance, and for me, the role of teacher or educator sits somewhat uncomfortably within the matrix of multiple roles described here. Rather than an implicit persona that can be uncovered through reflecting on designing projects, it presents itself at first in a rather formal guise, with externally understood professional and occupational characteristics. To teach is by definition “to impart knowledge or skills, to give instructions” and within this definition is contained the primary hierarchy that distinguishes the teacher from the taught, the instructor from the instructed. In most cases of teaching practice this simple hierarchy is of course true, so why am I uneasy with this classification? Returning to reflections made in Chapter One it seems to me to be problematic to assume that a body of knowledge as rich, diverse and tacit as architectural design can indeed be taught from a position of expertise at all. And conversely that those learning about design, or on the receiving end of design, are in a state of complete ignorance. Like the ‘thick description’ that Geertz (Geertz 1973 p 14) defined, educating others about a body of knowledge which is defined by transformation and practice (not fixity and facts) means educating others to unravel the layers of signification and meaning in every situation in which design finds itself. In many ways the role of the teacher at muf and muf-aus might be better characterised as a sharing and communication of design with others, not necessarily from a state of expertise, but through an understanding of it as some sort of common language. And therefore rather than being singularly associated with the teaching of student architects (in a professional mode) it might be better to conceive of this role as an educational one undertaken with many other constituencies; the public, the local resident, the user, the child.

Quite early on in my teaching career, simultaneously practicing as a newly qualified architect, some potential problems inherent in architectural education became clear for me: its lack of pragmatism and application; its conceptual distance from everyday life and people; its esoteric and internal discourse; and the absence of much discussion about actually commissioning or procuring architecture in the city, despite its clear intention to be part of a broader social and cultural discourse within society. Musing on this paradox led me to be discontented with some of the more impenetrable conventions of architectural education.

An attempt to demystify architecture; to allow it to become a more legible and intelligible cultural process, has characterised the way I have addressed education since. Part of this has been concerned with how one can remove the separation between 'teaching' architecture and doing architecture; therefore to consider 'teaching' in a new way, as a part of designing.

In this chapter, I will muse on a mode of designing which has implicitly taken on the role of teacher as a process in design, rather than as a separate instructional pedagogy for teaching design. In this respect it might be more useful to describe this persona or role as an educator, who "leads forth from" and imparts a body of knowledge - in the spirit of the coach or the mentor. However what is important, is to articulate how this role of teacher/educator is an implicit ingredient in designing itself, and not just an added extra to the otherwise 'main game' of design practice. The role of the teacher, and behaving as a teacher, is part of a persona that operates at a number of levels in the projects of muf and muf_aus. The definition of the role is important in order to understand the nuances between teaching as an occupation (the practitioner-academic responsible for formal teaching of architecture), and teaching and learning as a mode of design operation. My argument is that the mode of simultaneously doing and teaching architecture - a process of undertaking projects with people - tries to extend beyond a teaching technique alone, into a type of practice that might question the autonomy of the profession of architecture and the implicit hierarchies of design knowledge.

This chapter will try to expand and justify these claims, through a speculation on the context of projects in architectural education, and examples undertaken. First though, outlining the definition of the roles within roles is important because it addresses some of the dilemmas set out in the introduction concerned with redefining participatory practice. It starts to distinguish a mode of practice that is not necessarily about participatory process (it is not involving people for the sake of consultation alone) but it rather has the intention to be transformatory through the process of situated and experiential learning - intending a broader acknowledgement and transference of architectural knowledge between people.

Roles within Roles

First and most obvious, the role of teacher is characterised for me, and others in the practice, as the mode of the practitioner-academic (van Schaik 2006 pp 128-138), a form of practice that we have operated within over the course of fifteen years involving a simultaneous role in both the world of professional practice and in architecture schools. This is not an unusual mode of practice in itself, and other practitioner-academics have speculated on the rich and integrated connections between teaching and practice:

'a seamless garment: the creative interaction between teaching, practice and research, suggesting an entity which is bigger than the sum of its parts, with an ability to carry numerous strands which gain strength and body from their interaction.' (Holbrook citing St John Wilson, 2006).

Holbrook T (2006) *Compendium: The work of Cambridge University Architecture Department*

Often for us, and quite pragmatically, this mode of teaching architecture whilst simultaneously practicing, has deliberately tried to integrate practice and teaching by conflating them into one action, the 'live' project which supportively or collaboratively undertakes a project that muf or muf_aus are involved in. For muf_aus this mode has expanded to characterise most projects.

Second, we have used the occupation and activity of teaching as a form of agency, to provide mentoring, physical, financial and practical support for small-scale public realm projects that might otherwise flounder because they are at the margins of economic feasibility. Utilising the combined knowledge of a group of architecture students and staff, and the associated university resources they offer has often provided projects with the strategic leverage that allows them to move from pipe dreams into feasibility and inception stages, and on into implementation stages. In this sense the teaching role becomes a facilitation and enabling mechanism to get projects off the ground. This starts to mutate the hierarchy of teacher and pupil, and expand the potential of learning beyond the institution itself, such that the actions of educational endeavour become integrated into the place of the project. Such teaching is not about instruction, as much as mutual teamwork and guided activity, through which learning might happen at a range of levels and by a range of participants including students, local residents, stakeholders and lecturers

themselves. These forms of pragmatic agency are critical because they define and enable a type of project that might otherwise not exist. As an extreme example of this enabling agency, all of the projects for *Neighbourhood Renewal* (Victoria) within muf_aus have been initiated through this process, rather than been commissioned via a formal tendering of a brief. Small public realm projects and fragments of architecture in areas not subject to capital city funding are simply unlikely to happen without these sorts of additional support. But in addition, if the process becomes one that sits outside the realm of conventional practice, then it can arguably start to question the processes and norms of conventional practice.

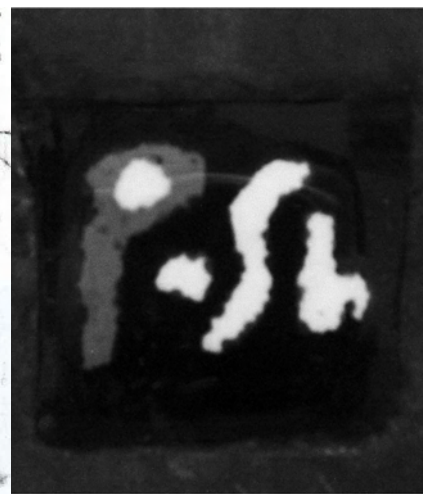
Finally, and importantly for design in the practice, the role of educator within muf and muf_aus expands beyond the formal notions of teaching, to become something that is both more subtle, and more useful in distinguishing it as a form of designing in its own right: as an actual activity in design process. Rather than being focused on 'teaching architecture', this is a mode concerned with collaborating with the public on projects. This shares common ground with dialogical or socially engaged art practice (a role discussed in the Chapters *The Artist*, and the *Double Agent*) because it draws on relational techniques of creative practice in the way that uses the performative and interactive to make linkages with others. So we use the devices of 'making' through the mechanism of the workshop, as a way to introduce and discuss ideas about space; a way to make design processes legible to other constituencies and stakeholders. In particular almost every project by the practice included as part of this document has involved interaction and involvement with children, mostly in a staged and curated way, as part of the designing process, though not always as a vehicle to produce the final design.

Shared Ground, Southwark: Workshops with the children of the Cathedral School in Southwark. Children were asked to visualise what they would like to happen walking to school. Fragments of the childrens work were embedded in the concrete benches as cast glass tags, for example the 'Posh' logo, which represented a stage for 'Posh Spice' on Southwark Street.

SHARED GROUND



84
85



On the
school I
guys
hospital

(1996-2000 Southwark, UK) we both spoke to children on the street, included them in the video, lead a series of workshops at the local school, included the outcomes as 'tags' in the final project, and finally opened the street with a tea party at the local café for the school involved. In *Do-It-Yourself Park* (2007-2008 Hastings, Australia) we encountered children in the park, developed a series of video workshops and a young persons website, and hosted a BBQ with a series of follies as set pieces for children.

Do-It-Yourself Park, Hastings: Children took us on walks, made films and worked on modelling their cubbies at scale in school workshops and events



Both of these projects, and others over the period, have utilised the work produced with children as both outcomes in themselves (posters, websites, masks) and as material for design strategies. Children's participation in projects by muf and mufaus has often been almost accidental, sometimes deliberate but certainly not ideologically focused on a desire to work with, or teach children for the sake of imparting architectural knowledge to them in a formal way. In the first publication, (muf, 2002 p165) the appearance of children in projects was identified as a characteristic of the practice's desire to uncover and foreground the invisible in the public realm;

'Activity at the eye level of the child and other marginalised views' (muf 2001 p 168).

This is What We Do: a muf manual (2001)





*A Horses Tale, Tilbury, UK
Local children were involved
in mask making workshops
as part of a process of
foregrounding horses in the
landscape. The masks were
used as a theatrical parade,
and to make posters for local
bus-stops*

Children, more than any other constituency, are often the least accommodated in the city, and the most marginalised. And yet in their activities and actions they seem most attentive and sensitive to the physical and spatial environment, having the most latent and tacit understandings of spatial and physical making (Opie, 1963, Ward 1976). What has emerged in working with children is that of all collaborators, children have the least prejudice about what architecture might actually be, and consequently are able to most effectively communicate and share their tacit spatial knowledge in action, learned in use through play. More than any other mode of 'teaching', working with children in this way has overlapped completely with designing in many projects, and in so doing has become a critical component of design practice.

If these are ways of introducing and defining the various roles characterized by the teacher/educator in my practice, it's useful to change focus and examine the context more broadly. What are the scholarly precedents for teaching and designing as separate but overlapping modes of practice?

This tendency to start with the 'ordinary' and 'real' as the setting for teaching architecture has necessitated thinking differently about the situations in which people learn, and whom they might learn from. Rather than architectural knowledge being an expertise separated from society, it seems to me important to understand it as a powerful and shared realm for understanding. Like other architects, designers and artists, this has partly been about searching for the legitimization of my work and for activities that are relevant to society, rather than detached from it. This is not particularly new or original. Design and social engagement has had a charged history in the late twentieth century, with strong debates about participatory practices of design epitomized by Giancarlo de Carlo's seminal essay in 1969 'Architecture's Public' (De Carlo 2007 pp. 3-22) in which De Carlo advocates design as a social art. His powerful argument contained amongst others the heading 'architecture is too important to be left to architects'; an indictment of the narrow and oppressive regime of operation to which architecture had, in his opinion, confined itself; the realm of autonomy and specialization 'where only the problems of how are important, because

Engagement with the Public

the problems of why are considered solved once and for all'.

Not only do his comments allude to a need for a broader, connected and more expansive definition of the 'role' or persona of the architect and designer, it is also crucial that he begins his argument by stating the problem as the education of the architect. As he articulates

De Carlo G (2007) '*Architecture's Public*' in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till

'the very school for the preparation of architects was born out of an ambiguous coupling of arts and technology...a combination of irreconcilable opposites' (De Carlo 2007 pp. 3-22)

Certainly De Carlo and others saw the ambiguous disciplinary domain of architectural and design education as a problematic territory, which interrupted and distanced its contact with social transformation. So entrenched is the problem of architectural education that the situation does not appear to have been addressed in the last forty years. Leon van Schaik has recently written:

van Schaik, L (2008) *Spatial Intelligence*

'architecture was professionalized around the wrong body of knowledge: one unrelated specifically to any of the basic human intelligences, but rather related to a broad amalgam of capabilities that can be seen to underpin aspects of construction engineering, building and technical drafting. The crucial key to being a profession – custody of a body of knowledge – was thus never secured for architecture' (van Schaik 2008 p 193).

The issue of architecture's separation from society seems to have emerged from its placement in a niche of specialization that renders it quite detached from peoples' experiences of everyday space. Rather than a cultural domain of spatial intelligence it is more often relegated to the technical body of knowledge of building performance. No wonder the public find it difficult to make sense of how their social relationships might relate to their built environment, and how design might intervene.

It is useful to take a broader perspective about education for a moment, because part of the concern here is to understand how we might learn beyond the confines of disciplinary and specialised knowledge. Educational and critical

pedagogy scholarship has established, in the last thirty years the necessity and value of ‘situated’ and ‘experiential learning’ (Lave and Wenger 1991, Kolb 1984) which relies upon an active engagement in daily life. This pedagogical position acknowledges the need to incorporate and rehearse higher order skills of thinking, problem solving and collaboration in authentic real world settings and environments, where students are encouraged to become self-regulatory, self-mediated and active in the construction of meanings. This ‘re-conceiving’ of learners and educational environments opens up the possibility to see learning as a process that can take place within a real context beyond the classroom, or the architectural studio – what Lave and Wenger refer to as a ‘community of practice’. As William Hanks puts it in his introduction to their book:

‘Rather than asking what kind of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved, they ask what kinds of social engagements provide the proper context for learning to take place’ (Lave + Wenger 1991, p 14).

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*

It is not so much that learners acquire structures or models to understand the world, but they participate in frameworks that have structure. Learning involves participation in a community of practice. And that participation

‘refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities’ (Lave + Wenger 1999 p 4).

Lave, J., & Wenger, E (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*

This mode of learning expands well beyond ‘learning by doing’ or experiential learning; it involves learners being *full participants in the world*. In this respect, it would seem that modelling architectural and design education on a strong ‘situated’ learning pedagogy would render it capable of reconnecting with its essential social purpose, addressing its tendencies for detachment. But more broadly, it also offers the opportunity for others (the public, the practitioner) to re-engage with the question of their own and others’ social space and cultural landscape.

Service Learning

*Rural Studio, Alabama, USA:
An outreach project of Auburn
University Architecture
School in Hale County, which
design and builds homes for
local people.*

In fact, there is an established practice of embedding architectural and landscape architecture students in real projects, through the tradition of 'service' learning in the USA (Hardin et al 2006, Pearson 2002) which emerged at a similar juncture to De Carlo's polemic and which more broadly connected the realms of experiential education and meaningful community service. Service learning contains within it a host of models or types, from the design and build notion, which involves actually constructing projects (usually for those in need) to more generalised versions of fieldwork and strategic design assistance for communities or agencies. In the USA it is, and was, often facilitated through the establishment of a type of intermediary bureau, office or 'university-community design centres', key examples from the numerous versions being the Rural Studio, and the Detroit Collaborative Design Centre both of which are embedded in different ways within universities.



The tradition of service learning in the design disciplines in the USA is well described by others (Hardin 2006, Pearson 2002) who point out some of its key characteristics and also inherent dangers. Central amongst these is the ambiguous and unequal notion contained within the relationships of learning through service to others - as Shumann points out:

'Because many, if not most service-based learning situations involve an unequal starting point in terms of technical expertise, access to information, and the ability to negotiate with public and private bureaucracies, there is an inherent risk of exploitation where the community setting is used as a laboratory to serve the university' (Schumann in Hardin 2006).

Schumann A (2006) 'The Pedagogy of Engagement' in *From the Studio to the Street: Service Learning in Planning and Architecture* Ed Hardin M, Eribes R, Corky

Certain trajectories within the service learning movement responded to this danger more actively by a closer and more radical social agenda, epitomised by Paulo Freire, for example. His 'critical pedagogy' as a 'pedagogy for the oppressed' (Freire 1970) saw education as a political act, and was critical of teacher-student dichotomies as a simplistic binary that negated the values of other forms of knowledge, and the capacity for a deeper reciprocity of learning between those involved:

'Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students and teachers' (Freire, 1970, p. 72).

Freire P (2007) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Although not specifically applied to design education, Freire's politicized pedagogy was intended to awaken in people a critical consciousness, such that the process was transformatory rather than exploitative.

Of course the origins of these models of 'service learning' emerged through strong cultures of 1960's activism, but whilst there has remained a vibrant lineage in planning disciplines since that period, the practice has largely fallen out of architectural and design programs with certain notable exceptions. Speculating on why this has been the case we could return to the problematic question of the autonomy of architecture and design, especially the schism or disjunction that seems to exist between architecture and the social sciences. Despite the sophisticated polemic of key practitioners like De Carlo, there is no doubt that much community engagement and design practices in the 1970s - often described as community planning - have since become discredited. Problematic among these models was their tendency to devalue the role of design with a resulting disinterest in (or indeed an active revolt against) formalism and aesthetics. In opening

up to a more active and engaged social discourse about the role of design, it seems the matters of form and aesthetics were by necessity demoted in importance, unable to be framed as sufficiently valuable to jostle for equal space with the powerful social rationale of 'service'.

As described in the previous chapter *The Double Agent*, there has been a resurgence of interest in design activism and design engagement in recent years, and this has corresponded with a whole range of new modes of architectural education that are driven through 'live' projects with humanitarian and philanthropic agendas. The research unit CODE at RMIT (established in 2007 by myself, Fiona Harrison and Esther Charlesworth) held a Symposium collecting together a range of these practices nationally and internationally, with the intention of critically reviewing the territory and ambitions of a new wave of 'service learning'. Partly these trends can be argued as a backlash to an intervening period of postmodern introspection and critique in which socially orientated architecture has taken a back seat. However, for some of the new genre of 'live' projects different forces are at work which perhaps distinguish them from the traditions of philanthropy implicit in a service learning tradition. Freire's notion of the problematic and contradictory binary of the teacher and student is useful as a reference because the new genre starts to attempt to undermine traditional hierarchies in terms of 'who is teaching who'. This is difficult territory for the discipline of architecture as described in the Chapter, *The Local*. Knowledge and meaning often seems to be skewed in favour of the professional, with their skills and expertise in the delivery of the constructed object. Even as students, architecture and design professionals appear to 'know' more than others, so that any actual learning in context becomes problematic. Trying to undermine these problematic hierarchies of knowledge seems critical to open up a dialogue for genuine reciprocal learning.

In the persona of the educator the practice of muf and muf_au resists dogmatic assertions of improvement or amelioration for those being 'served' and the terminology of 'service' learning itself seems to be avoided in most contemporary definitions, because of uncomfortable and one-sided associations it might have with paternalism. If, as Freire states, education is a political act then it is within the notion of creative transformation, rather than social

amelioration that our projects might hope to operate. But how might this happen?

An alternate trajectory, and useful exemplar within this mode of teacher/educator is played out through the specific tradition of artists and architect's interactions with children. Although not explicitly concerned with establishing a pedagogical position for how to teach architecture, such practice can offer a more fruitful and less didactic model for understanding the way in which architectural education can transform itself and become a design practice in its own right. As an early example of architecture's interest in informal play, some of the observational photography by Nigel Henderson, a fellow 'Independent Group' member with Alison and Peter Smithson, included images of children playing in the street in Bethnal Green.

Teaching and Playing



Nigel Henderson : Independent Group (left)
Images of children playing on the street in Bethnal Green 1950's Britain.

Images from Colin Ward's 'The Child in the City' (right): (1978)
Colonising small spaces.

For the Smithsons, children's activity was seen as a means of urban occupation from the bottom up; the child not as victim but as an active agent in the city. In the same vein, but more explicitly, Colin Ward has provided rich and thoughtful reveries on children and the urban environment (Ward 1978) starting with the premise that

'the environmental experience of the child must be different simply because of the difference in scale' (Ward ibid p 22).

Colin Ward, (1978) *The Child in the City*

More recently the artist Nils Norman has explored the

boundaries of architecture and play (Norman 2004) in his survey and interest in the adventure playground tradition, including the tradition developed through Aldo Van Eyck's work with city and the junk playgrounds. The conception of the junk playground was initially developed by the Danish landscape architect, C T Sorenson, in the 1930's and emerged in England in bombed out London in 1948, for example the Camberwell Playground. This kind of playground incited children to transform and inhabit space and in the words of another play leader 'to identify with it, because it would be theirs' (Kovslosky 2009 p 208). Crucial to this was the part played by the 'play leader' since the playground was defined as

Kovslosky R (2009) 'Urban Play: Intimate Space and Postwar Subjectivity' in Di Palma, V Periton, D Lathouri, M 'Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City'

'children, a site, and a play leader' as the 'humanizing element, who brings the whole place to life' (Kovslosky 2009 p 208).

This tradition of spatial and physical exploration by children through play has probably fascinated architects because it offers an opportunity and model by which to share and explore the architectural body of knowledge with the non-expert. Crucially a non-expert – the child – who is surprisingly in touch with the spatial and physical environment and grounds through creative structures of playing and making. Therefore whose expertise is alternate and revealing. Kevin Lynch and others have noted that in children's memories of city childhoods, the ground or floor was particularly rich and tactile component, not surprisingly since the child's eye level is closer to the ground (Lynch 1960). In a similar vein Shepherd notes:

Shepherd P (1975) 'Play and Human Development' Address to Symposium Children, Nature and the Urban Environment Washington.

'space in juvenile life is structured differently that at other ages...It is intensely concerned with paths and boundaries, with hiding places and other special places for particular things' (Shepherd 1975).

It is telling that it has frequently been artists, rather than architects, who have been most adept at integrating the spatial engagements of children into creative practice. Contemporary examples of design practice involving children are never the less interesting including projects by Lynn Kinnear (Kinnear Landscape Architects) such as the Experimental Playground for Daubeney School, London. Here, 454 children were involved in an extended workshop,

which experimented with flexible play infrastructures, devised with the collaborator and artist Hattie Coppard. Similarly the Baupiloten Practice in Berlin, established by Susanne Hoffman, has devised an organizational teaching process that involves building 'with' children, for example the design and development of a child care environment (Hofmann 2004).



Lynn Kinnear Landscape Architects, UK (top): Daubeney Playground, London, with Hattie Coppard

The Baupiloten, Susanne Hoffmann, Berlin. Extensions to a Kindergarten

What all of these engagements with children have in common is that they move outside of the frameworks of 'teaching' and 'practice' and occupy a slippery realm which, rather than being motivated by ideological motivations or pedagogical frameworks merges seamlessly into a mode of designing which is less autonomous, and more socially engaged. As Colin Ward asks

Ward C (1978) *The Child in the City*

'how often do we give children the opportunity to show us what they know about the space in which they move around?' (Ward 1978 p 28).

This is a mode of action which is that of the teacher or educator, but which subverts the conventional hierarchical framework for learning. It might seem closer to a kind of shared learning as discussed by Ward in 'Streetwork: The Exploding School' (1973) which sees environmentally engaged learning in terms of the school 'exploding' into its environment. A good example of this was the Parkway Education Program in Philadelphia in which there were no school buildings and in which all learning took place within the community:

Ward C (1973) *Streetwork: The Exploding School*

'the city offers and incredible amount of learning labs; art students study at the art museum, biology at the zoo, vocational courses on the job sites....the program itself looks at 'wasted sites' (Ward 1973 p 6).

This idea of finding opportunities within the city as sites of environmental or spatial learning characterizes projects for us too. For muf_aus in the project *What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* (2008-ongoing, Hastings, Australia) the production of a 'digital map' or geoplaced website provided a forum for presenting the housing estate of West Park in Hastings through a cross section of its inhabitants (children) by cross programming a physical map, with micro-photo documentaries. The production of the website was by students, and the documentaries were produced by local children. This 'interactive' device was seen as an alternative to the conventional process of community survey that relies purely on verbal structured interview and multiple-choice questionnaire. The prototype website was a web-based community interface which was visual and spatial (a series of map layers) rather than text based, as a represen-

tation of the occupation of the physical environment and key places and spaces. The map therefore operated as a tool for self-education through collecting, collating and representing the socio-spatial activities of local children as part of the survey process. Embedded in the visual maps are people icons which link to a short film repository of narratives collected as part of a series of school workshops. The participant children, like the students, became a constituent part of the process of making. The micro-documentaries and their everyday socio-spatial stories become part of a current propositional stage of 'surfacing' the children's expertise through tactical interventions (for example, 'follies'; cubby-like and negotiable play pavilions). The project was envisioned as a strategic network of design outcomes, a form of 'designing' that privileges the social, the anecdotal, the momentary, the local, and can both gather information and operate as a designed intervention: a means of teaching and sharing information, and resource in its own right.

What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?: Children's documentation of their activities were made into digital stories and geoplaced onto a digital map.



The notion of exchange in muf and muf_au projects articulates and gives form to an ambiguity of expertise. The dissolving (at least partially) of the traditional hierarchy of spatial knowledge is often provoked by workshops which allow local children to collaborate and author the site research, and even contribute to temporary designed incursions like websites, posters, parades and perform-

ances. The ideological and deterministic belief in a relationship between design and social benefit often belies a discrepancy between 'designed' intent and actual spatial experience. Most often this simply does not translate. What seems most at stake in projects that seek for shared meanings of place is that the environmental improvements are not cosmetic (and illegible) but that they begin to carry the complex social and cultural meaning of everyday life in a place. Meaningful design presumably allows at least some of its users to 'get it'?

Reflective Practice

If the hierarchy of learning between the educator and the learner becomes more complex and mutable our projects, it can also be seen that, from the perspective of the university, relationships between learning, teaching, practice and research also start to become more unpredictable, but fertile. Boyer's expanded definition of scholarship places these relationships within a framework of 'discovery, integration, application, teaching' (Boyer 1996) and emphasizes the way in which an integration of these areas better reflects the way in which practitioners can operate effectively. Clearly the role of educator allows a process of integration where stakeholders and constituencies exercise a range of applied and active 'thinking on the job', but where the practitioner-academic is also undertaking these activities, contributing simultaneously to multiple modes of scholarship. Crucial to our understanding of how integrated scholarship actually operates in architecture and design education through 'live' projects is the operative modes of 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action', which are terms developed by Donald Schon (1983). Schon brought 'reflection' into a central understanding of what professionals do, and his case studies of architects make specific contribution to understanding integrated scholarship for the design disciplines. He deliberately re-framed professional knowledge from a technical/rational stereotype, to a positive epistemology of practice,

Schon, D (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.*

'in which the knowledge inherent in practice is be understood as artful doing' (Schon 1997 p 143).

Rather than constructing a body of knowledge within the professional disciplines of design as 'certainty' (a scientific model of knowledge unsuited to design enquiry) he re-framed it as an applied 'gleaning' of knowledge-in-action

achieved by ‘thinking on our feet’ in pursuit action of the design process; building up a ‘repertoire of practices’. This has been further developed by Leon van Schaik, through his work at RMIT’s School of Architecture and Design in the development of the practice based research model (van Schaik 2005), of which this PhD is a product. As practitioners we build up a collection of images, ideas, examples and actions that can be drawn upon. Schon, like John Dewey (Dewey 1933 p 123), saw this as central to reflective thought:

‘When a practitioner makes sense of a situation he perceives to be unique, he sees it as something already present in his repertoire. To see this site as that one is not to subsume the first under a familiar category or rule. It is, rather, to see the unfamiliar, unique situation as both similar to and different from the familiar one, without at first being able to say similar or different with respect to what. The familiar situation functions as a precedent, or a metaphor, or... an exemplar for the unfamiliar one’ (Schön 1983 p 138).

Schon, D (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.*

The notion of a ‘repertoire of practices’ is a key aspect for defining and explaining the work of muf and muf_aus, and is drawn out also in Books A-D. This explanation also goes some way toward elucidating how, as architects and designers, we can envisage a specific site both objectively and subjectively, avoiding a generic or systematic approach to design, and being able to make some sort of sense of difference, multiplicity and uncertainty. This is expanded upon in the Chapters *The Local* and *The Policy Maker*.

But additionally what is critical about acknowledging a ‘repertoire of practices’ is that we all have one. In this way practitioners, the public, students and children engage with a situation and act within it. By allowing others within a site to understand their own occupation of it in terms of a repertoire of their personal spatial practices, the practices of muf and muf_aus are behaving as educators in the widest (and hopefully least patronizing) way; an inversion of the conventional hierarchy of instruction. Like Polanyi’s definitions and explanations of tacit knowledge this may be less about exposing what someone doesn’t know, than allowing them to reveal what they do

know. Given that, according to Polanyi:

Polanyi, Michael (1967) *The Tacit Dimension*

'We can know more than we can tell' (Polanyi 1967 p 4)

The incorporation of this realm into designing allows others to make transformative leaps towards communicating intuitions, hunches and deep knowledges about their space and place. In the process, such 'revealing' moves towards creative acts in their own right, for all parties involved.

Conclusion

Reflecting on this chapter, perhaps it becomes clear that by integrating practice with teaching as a mode of design activity the role of the educator might arguably 'do' design as it is being 'taught'. Rather than being driven through an ideological approach to 'service' or 'participation' in design, what defines the role of the educator at muf and muf_aus is the desire to understand the designer as a more slippery and mutable practice, which is in a constant state of reinvention depending on the site, the situation and the public involved. This is an understanding, not of the designer in the position of expertise, but instead located on a more equitable platform with other constituencies, a place in which our knowledge is relative, often tacit, and to be shared.

Shamiyeh, M (2007) *'Design New Futures' Volume Magazine #14*

The creation of an expanded space for architecture and design as a more comprehensive practice, and one that enlarges the field of play, relies on a proactive and enterprising mode of operation. This mode uses 'invention' or conjectural thinking to be concerned not just with the necessary, but with the contingent – how things might be (Shamiyeh, 2007 pp22-25).

More than any other these require skills of 'thinking in action' rather than just design skills. I have attempted to situate the role of the educator at muf and muf_aus within a broader educational discourse, both with respect to how we teach design, but also how we might do design – especially in a contemporary situation which more than ever requires reflective and integrated skills which allow conjectural testing and transformatory innovations in practice and spatial thinking. The role of the teacher/educator has become incredibly important to the projects because of

the way it operates at multiple levels, and with multiple players, expanding well beyond the teaching of architecture into the broader constituencies and communities of the places in which design occurs. This is way of doing architecture that is transformative because, arguably, it is a reflective creative practice for non-designers as much as the students and teachers involved.

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The Artist



Of all of the multiple personas, played out within the practice of muf and muf_aus, the artist is the one that is most explicit and which has clearly been elaborated upon as part of the practice's multidisciplinary identity. It is a role which has been surfaced and fore-grounded by the practice themselves in writings and speculations on practice. In the publication *This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual* (2001) the practice is clearly defined as a collaborative union of art and architecture, specifically through the early presence of founding partner and artist Katherine Clarke and other key artist members since, including Ashley McCormick. In early projects the tensions of working in a collaborative mode as architects and artists together was a crucial way in which the issues of contestation, misunderstanding, disagreement and communicative transformation were played out, providing resonances for use in projects including participation with the public and the 'client' themselves.

If we believe that a contextual approach to human coexistence, which takes on board plurality and contradiction is essential in order to act politically (Mouffe 1993), then this idea of difference within the agitated alliances of collaboration is a valid challenge to engage in when working across disciplinary boundaries, and with the public. Often it feels that everyone wants something different, with conflicting expectations and desires. The contested realm of public space is, of course, its value: a place where democracy is played out, and frictions are explicit. By definition, public space may not be an easy place. But how can design engage with this dimension of the difficult? For the architect and city designer, as representatives of those in power (government, centralized authorities) there is a temptation to problem solve, and build consensus through the act of design. The deterministic approach of modernist thinking has been persuasive, and is often still implicitly and explicitly co-opted in making causal links between consensus and urban form.

Writers and practitioners who have mused on the city as a public realm have noted the tendency for architecture and regimes of the city to 'control' space, and have characterised areas *beyond* control – the 'terrain vague' (Sola Morales Rubio 1995) or the 'parafunctional' (Papastergiadis, 1996), as having the most potentiality to be truly public:

Sola-Morales Rubio I (1995)
Terrain Vague in 'Anyplace'
Cynthia Davidson (Ed)

'void, absence, yet also promise, the space of the possible, of expectation' (Sola-Morales Rubio 1995).

Socially engaged and contemporary art practice occupies this marginal realm. Artists have a way of acting that avoids the conundrum of authority by being less concerned with 'fixing' things, and more concerned with provocation:

Papastergiadis N (2006)
*Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place
and the Everyday*

'Within their subtle and minor acts of transgression there is a glimpse into form of urban dreaming that reveals the inhuman gaps in town planning' (Papastergiadis 2006 p 175).

Because art can operate within the realm of speculation, its findings are neither right nor wrong, but concerned with possibilities and alternatives. The resolution and values of a project may be in the ability to articulate a question you didn't know needed asking. The architect is legally bound by a duty of care toward the client, and to provide a series of concrete and measurable outcomes, justifying and validating budget expenditure on the basis of informed deterministic reasoning: if we do 'x' then 'y' will happen. The artist on the other hand, is completely free from the need to interpret via these predictable categories, and the response to a place, as a result of a collaboration between a community and an artist, has the potential to be particularly precise and honed.

In her essay *'We Need Artists Ways of Doing Things'* (Blundell-Jones, Petrescu, Till 2006), the late Kath Vaughan Williams (Shonfield), a long term collaborator of muf, says:

Vaughan Williams *'We need
Artists Ways of doing things'*
in *Architecture + Participation* Ed Blundell Jones,
Petrescu, Till.

"While the driving force in the one-off commission is the artist, community arts practice is about collaboration. The driving force is the community itself, aided and abetted by the artist. As such community based arts practice is one of the only deliberate acts in the regeneration process which simply cannot take place without the active involvement of at least some of the general public – the very people regeneration is for – in the physical transformation of a place." (Vaughan-Williams 2006 p221)

What is critical to the consideration of the role of the artist in this discussion is to reveal the way in which it, like

the other roles discussed, have become synthesized within designing itself to form an expanded mode of operative practice. This is rich territory; the traces of 'artist-behaving' are everywhere within the projects and have characterized some of the defining features of how and why design operates in the way that it does, which will be traced later. These 'artist' behaviours and personas also exist within processes and projects which have not formally involved an 'artist' member of the practice; for example most obviously within the projects of muf_aus.

How can we define 'artist-behaving' in the practice, and what precedents and derivations does this have for broader architectural practices for public realm projects?

Art practices that intervene and implicate the user in the artwork have of course been a trajectory within modern art. The past thirty years has seen the evolution of a mode of art practice in which the viewer has become implicit in the artwork as a *co-producer* (Bishop, 2006). This involves a social dimension and ambition for art, which moves beyond 1960's models of interactive or installation art into a collaborative and collective dimension for social experience and transformation. There are multiple cultural and artistic lineages from which such practice can be drawn. Walter Benjamin's articulation of the spectator as collaborator (Benjamin 1934) maintained that the work of art should actively provide a model for allowing viewers to be involved in the processes of production. Considering the artwork as a 'situational' device, rather than a spectral one, 'compels the spectator to *take up a position* towards the action' (Bishop, 2006 p11, my emphasis) and avoids the drift towards the visual noise and meaningless spectacle of capitalist life. The Situationist International art movement was therefore an early example of cultural practitioners finding alternate modes of expression (situational theatre, for example, by Berthold Brecht) which would involve and engage others in the construction of situations. The ambition was for an absolute rejection of an art separated from political action.

Socially Engaged Art

Duration, performativity and critique in art emerged in the 1960's with artists like Vito Acconci and Dan Graham developing what were nominally collaborative practices, and working towards a gradually more complex and reflexive approach. Practitioners like Stephen Willats, Helen and

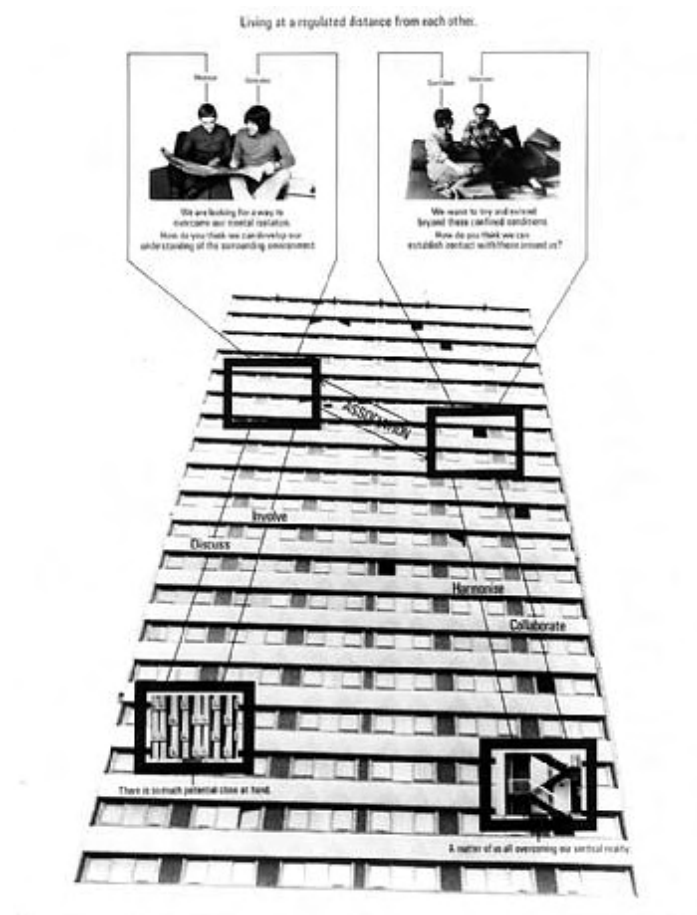
Newton Harrison, Conrad Atkinson and the *Artists Placement Group*, all saw their outcomes as partially, or wholly about the non-physical; the participatory potential and agency implicit in the artwork. Willats makes it clear in his desire for the outcomes of the work to have a 'dynamic, interactive social function' (Willats, 2009).

'A pre-requisite for an artwork that manifests a counter consciousness is that the separation which existed between the artist and the audience is closed, that they become mutually engaged to the point where the audience become the rationale in both the making and the reception of the work.' (Willats 2010).

Willat S (2006) *Society Through Art*,

London based Willats was influential in the 1970's, producing a number of extended projects with the residents of public housing estates and towers in Europe. Concerned with the social experience of living in these environments he sought to identify and develop modes of resistance and critical consciousness with residents. He did this through visual exercises in self-reflection and collaborative interaction to reflect back on the network of visible and invisible forces acting upon their lives. For example in Brentford Towers (1986) residents explain and visualize their lives with Willats, via statements, photographs, diagramming and exhibition, and in the process are distanced from the experience of everyday life.

Stephen Willats: Image from the project Brentford Towers (1985). A group of fifteen residents of Harvey House worked with Willats to select objects from within their living room that had a personal significance for their life within the block and contrast them with something they could see from their picture windows in the same living room to which they attached a special meaning. Willats then made photographs of these various objects with the residents and tape recorded discussions with them about the relationship between the objects of the interior and exterior environment. The responses were presented on display boards.



Many authors (Bourriaud, Kester, Kwon, Lacy, Bishop, Papastergiadis and Barber amongst others) have both documented and attempted to define this trajectory of socially engaged art practice, in the process both providing useful descriptions and terminology – relational art, dialogical art, and new genre public art for example. Suzanne Lacy, in the 1991 Symposium *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* attempted to start to make a definition of these practices noting that they tend to be responsive to local contexts and cultures; less concerned with the creation of objects per se, than with a collaborative process that would transform the consciousness of both the artist and their co-participant. In this sense, many commentators (and critics) have reflected on whether the practice represents art or activism, but Kester (2006) and others are clear that such critique often reflects ‘a lack of critical frameworks for dealing with projects that are organized around a collaborative frameworks rather than a specular relationship with the viewer’ (Kester 2004 p 11).

Kester G (2004) *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*

There is of course a relevant line to be drawn between radical politics, activism and dialogical art, since it has a self-defined ambition to re-integrate art into the political realm. This active provocational dimension has been utilized for many radical political platforms, represented, for example, by the recent retrospective exhibition *Radical Nature: Art and Architecture for a Changing Planet 1969-2009* which documented artworks engaging with environmental activism from the pragmatic to the utopian, including works by Joseph Beuys and Hans Haacke. However it is also clear that rather than be classified as a branch of radical activism, such artwork has an ambition that is deliberately aesthetic in its mode of operation. Kester describes the operative mode in this way:

‘This catalysation of the viewer, the movement toward direct interaction, decisively shifts the locus of aesthetic meaning from the moment of creative plenitude in the solitary act of making (or the viewers imaginative reconstruction of the act) to a social and discursive realm of shared experience, dialogue and physical movement’ (Kester 2004 p54).

Kester G (2004) *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*

He goes on to define this as a ‘rampant solicitation of the viewer’ ensuring their ‘transformation into a collaborator

of sorts'. (Kester 2004) And as Papastergiadis notes:

Papastergiadis N (2006)
*Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place
and the Everyday*

'an artist in such circumstances is not just a neutral witness but is embedded in a complex network of relationships and obligations' (Papastergiadis 2006 p 173).

Clearly part of the ambition associated with socially engaged artworks lies within the processes of engagement and interaction that constitute its dialogical (and potentially political) approach. This concern with process (ever changing and unfinished production), as opposed to outcome, often forms a fundamental defining characteristic and critique for the work, including when it becomes integrated in designing objects and spaces. However, there is of course no reason why the processes of such work cannot have aesthetic values and effects in their own terms, especially of relevance if considering architecture and inhabited space as an ongoing resonant echo of dialogical creative work. In conventional art critical frameworks the notion of an aesthetic 'shock' or dislocation, is a device well described by cultural thinkers to frame the process by which art acts to 'counteract the false reality conveyed by dominant cultural forms, creating a 'heightened presence of mind' (Benjamin 1969 p238). The experience of somatic shock is therefore seen as a way to react to the anaesthetic haze of modern life. The aesthetic experience, as developed by early philosophers such as Baumgarten, Kant and Wolff is defined by its potential communicability, usually through its difference to other cultural forms, which are more dominant. Kester describes dialogical practices, using work by Lyotard on the differend (Kester 2004 p88), which he defines as representing the unrepresentable. The principles and discussions of dialogism are useful here also because they also refer to the indeterminacy and essential unfinalizability of all language and thought which is dialogic, dynamic, relational and engaged in endless processes of re-description of the world. In the dialogical aesthetic we can arguably see a refusal to complete, or universalize the creative work as a completed piece, but rather to see it as a continuous dialogue between participants, capable of communicating difference and difficulty in an ongoing aesthetic engagement.

Current Practices

If the legacy of early dialogical modern art can be seen to have set in motion a set of contested discussions about the ambiguity and domain of operative actions, then a second generation of artists and practitioners - including ourselves at muf - has only added to the complexity of critical definition, which includes a range of hybrid and multidisciplinary practices. As Kester notes:

'While this collaborative consultative approach has deep and complex roots in the history of art and cultural activism, it has also energized a younger generation of practitioners and collectives such as Ala Plastica in Buenos Aires, Superflex in Denmark, Maurice O'Connell in Dublin, Muf in London, Huit Facettes in Senegal, Ne Pas Plier in Paris, Ultra Red in LA and Temporary Services in Chicago' (Kester 2004 p9).

Kester G (2004) Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art

What characterizes the approaches of this contemporary generation most clearly is the way in which our organizational frameworks for operations (studios, collectives, practices) and projects (art, installations, architecture, public space) reveal a promiscuous facility to cross the conventional boundaries of practice. Perhaps this is partly a response to the pressures of urban regeneration (which will be covered in more detail in the final chapter *The Policy Maker*), which have increasingly presented the possibilities and problems of urban change as opportunistic sites for action, either officially or unofficially.

The artist Jeanne Van Heeswijk is a good example of operating across both domains in her project *De Strip*, which took place in 2002 in a borough of Rotterdam housing 16,000 people and subject to massive regeneration plans. The question was asked by Heeswijk, how can residents be involved in that transformation? Using empty shop premises and 3500 m² of floor space, the artist proposed to convert the vacant premises into spaces for 'cultural production'. She involved diverse collaborators including the museum, local gallery and arts agency, film and video facilities, to create an incubator for events. Studios were given to artists and craftspeople in exchange for them devising and producing projects that linked to residents. For example, the museum opened an annexe in a shop-front exposing everyday objects collected from residents; a café provided food produced from a community garden project.

Every three months a new program, which focused on local issues would start. Open for two years before the regeneration began and the building were demolished and adapted, the project built up an archive of public engagements that could feed into the proposals. Moreover these were focused spatially in the 'strip' to provide a new communal and active realm in a blighted community; the production of an actual physical space as well as a space for dialogue and local cultural expansion.

'De Strip' by Jeanne van Heeswijk



Van Heeswijk's role as artist expanded to both cultural curator, facilitator, and even architect since one can argue that *De Strip* has design content both implicit and explicit within its operational actions. The art group *Wochenklauer* define this ability to move radically outside and around disciplines as a strength, which enhances the dialogical and open ended actions of the artwork. In other words, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the artist has the ability to stand outside of traditional and dominant boundaries within society, and is actually free to operate radically as a consequence. This mode of action has powerful consequences because it shocks and subverts the conventional cultural understandings of urban change and regeneration. These aspects of relational art's 'agency', allows it to be 'borrowed' by other more instrumental disciplines, including architecture, urban planning and engineering. Consequently there have emerged a range of art agencies (*General Public Agency* founded by Lucy Musgrave and Claire Cumberland; *Crimson* founded by Michelle Provoost and Wouter Vanstiphout) which focus on urban regeneration project consultancy, but which operate through the curation and commissioning of art projects. *Crimson* see themselves as 'spatial agents'. Their working method

begins with empirical research, finding out through interviews and observations what is there, both physically and socially. Using this material, they construct a narrative for the area that is led not by the desire for commercial development but is instead a powerful and very specific story to convince people of the potential of the area.

Other examples of collaborative architectural practitioners include Lang + Bohm who operate in the UK as a collaborative art and architecture partnership (Andreas Lang as architect and Katrin Bohm as artist). They also often also collaborate as part of a larger architectural practice called *Public Works*, and therefore are more explicit about their ambition to operate within the professional domain of architecture. Their project, *Mobile Porch* began in 1999 as a temporary site-specific proposal for the public art program of the North Kensington Amenity Trust (now Westway Development Trust), coordinated by Georgia Ward. Its initial idea was to create a tool that allows links between contemporary art practice and a local audience.

*'Mobile Porch' by Lang + Bohm (1999).
A rolling and unfolding device
for public appropriation and
use: linking contemporary art
practice and local audiences.*



During 2000 *Mobile Porch* developed into a prototype for other public sites and was designed to create an appropriate object for a public sphere that was multifunctional in

its use and flexible in its purpose; intended to be both very clear and very ambiguous. Its full meaning and definition was to be developed over time, but eventually included life as a shed, a reception desk, a stage, a bench, a lamp, a screen, a catwalk, a workshop, a vehicle, etc. It was both a physically movable and pragmatic structural enclosure to support events, but also a social incubator to be used opportunistically by the public. During the two months residency at North Kensington Amenity Trust Mobile Porch was used by a large number of people on trust land to create short term activities, organize social events or to drop ideas for further projects on site creating a strong feeling of curious interest from its first day on site.

Artists and Regeneration

This ability for artists to move, apparently freely, in and out of the restrictive and dominant boundaries of the mainstream can have potentially problematic side-effects, exposed by this most recent generation of practitioners and articulated by others, including artists themselves. It seems that the easier the boundaries are crossed, the more the artist becomes complicit in being part of the mainstream from which they claim to have opted out. Nils Norman, an artist working in the UK and Europe says:

'Artists are now inescapably inscribed within urban regeneration strategies, and in order to start thinking about that bind critically, we need to begin creating more disruptive and experimental methodologies, not just 'neo-situationist' spectacles' (Smith 2008).

Smith S (2008) *Beyond Green:
Toward a Sustainable Art*

His critique clearly refers to the plethora of practices currently engaged in work – like our own – that slides rather easily across the spectrum from artist-activist to architect-planner according to the commissioning agency and the relevant economy of fees and budgets. Certainly work which is partially polemical and partially functional does blur the boundaries between art and design, and present the practitioner with the problem of the ambiguity of their own agency, and the possibility of instrumentalizing what is supposed to be an act of resistance (as introduced in the chapter *The Double Agent*). For Norman this subverts the language of art for capitalist ends, and is part of the slide toward the collapse of art as resistance or political act:



'Bohemia has been instrumentalized by people like Richard Florida who make direct links to creative bohemian lifestyles and a new class of urban entrepreneurs through city regeneration' (Smith quoting Nils Norman 2008).

Smith S (2008) *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art*

Norman's projects attempt to navigate a path which deliberately uses both the domain of art, and that of architecture, but which seems to avoid some of these loaded issues by retreating from a dialogical approach to one of mute provocation in some of his work, including painted hoardings and models. Never the less, projects like the Geocruiser, a traveling library and greenhouse, was initially commissioned as a speculative public art project (and painting) but in fact became real through Arts Council funding, proving that the slippery boundaries of such practice are now entrenched.

Images of projects by Nils Norman.
 Left: *The University of Trash is an installation that functions as a temporary, makeshift University - hosting courses, lectures, presentations, and workshops.*
 Right: *The Geocruiser a travelling library and greenhouse.*

Other critics have also observed some of the slippages between relational art practices and regeneration spin. In her essay *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents* Claire Bishop writes that

'New labour uses rhetoric almost identical to that of socially engaged art to steer culture toward a politics of social inclusion'.

Bishop C (2006) *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*

Although social inclusion may be a valid ambition in and of itself, the co-opting of artworks capacity for acts of creative resistance, into mainstream and dominant forms presents a problem in the way that it makes art normative and complicit in universalizing and discursive realms. Bishop is concerned that there needs to be a way to critique such work beyond the ethical and social content, so that to avoid the problem that:

Bishop C (2006) *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*

‘aesthetic judgements have been overtaken by ethical criteria’.

Jacques Ranciere, speaking of aesthetics and politics, goes as far as to raise this dilemma as a fundamental issue for relational art practice operating in the political realm of regeneration practice:

Ranciere J (2004) *Problems and Transformations in Critical Art*

‘It is as if the shrinking of public space and the effacement of political inventiveness in a time of consensus gave a substitutive political function to the mini-demonstrations of artists, to their collections of objects and traces, to their mechanisms of interaction, to their provocations in situ or elsewhere. Knowing if these substitutions can recompose political space, or if they must be content to parody them, is certainly one of the questions of today.’

Of course the problem of community also becomes highly relevant for artworks that have an ambition for the socially transformative. Kester traces the dilemma of community arts back to its pedagogical relationship with the poor, and raises the question of the blurred boundary between art and social policy:

Kester G (2004) *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*

‘the community in community based art projects are usually people culturally, socially, and economically different from the artist; a sort of raw material in need of transformation’ (Kester 2004 p138).

The ethical dilemma here is whether artists have the expertise to operate as social workers. At a societal level this effect of such claims for relational art can ‘elide any analysis of the systematic causes of poverty and to put in its place a closed circuit of creative personal transformation presided over by the artist’ (Kester 2004 *ibid*). Whilst the majority of dialogical artwork seeks to use social engagement with community as the instigator of the work, the notion of community is therefore subject to the resonances of hegemony and universalizing, such that it is no longer possible to use the term in a radical political project. This is because, according to Young and others (Young 1990, Stuart Hall 1996, Doreen Massey 1994) ‘the ideal of community also suppresses difference between subjects and groups’ and consequently the distinctions between members and non-members, becomes intolerable. As Gillian

Rose explains in her essay *Performing the Inoperative Community*;

'Community arts workers are suspicious of hegemonic definitions. For them those who can define community are those in power, and definition then becomes part of the way power itself works' (Rose 1997 p191).

Rose G (1997) *Performing the Inoperative Community* in Pile S, Keith (1997) *Geographies of Resistance*

The darker side of relational art practices within the contemporary city presents to some extent a dilemma for the practitioner who seeks to integrate ways of 'artist-behaving' into their practice. The compromised position of modern art, its reduction to a fashionable commodity and its flourishing role in dominant urban regimes, provides some context and explanation why this is not a role to be taken trivially as a tool or technique in practice, nor one without complex and difficult ethical terrain to negotiate. Despite this, its potential to 're-think' the problem offers a powerful antidote to conventional conceptualizing of city design. One aspect which starts to address both critiques described above, is the extent to which we reconsider the matter of dialogical or socially engaged art from the alternate direction; from its aesthetic operations rather than its ethical dilemmas.

muf began working collaboratively as artists and architects in 1995. Although this was the period of emergence for this younger generation of practitioners it was never obvious at that time. But the territory can now be almost characterized as an orthodoxy for working with the public realm in the UK and Europe. Early projects like *The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities*, 1998, a public art commission located in Stoke on Trent (Hanley, UK), were critical examples of the way in which art funding was used to produce a relational artwork which occupied the territory between the public space design, urban regeneration and provocative relational art practice. Originally the brief asked for an artwork or 'sculpture' to act as a barrier to prevent illegal traffic entry (ram-raiding by local youth) to the town centre of Hanley, as part of the Cultural Quarters Urban Regeneration Strategy for Stoke on Trent. The brief was re-interpreted by Katherine Clarke to consider instead, how one might address the bigger causes of youth delinquency, rather than only react to its effects. muf initiated a dialogue with the council in order to widen the brief: how

*Visual,
Spatial and
Aesthetic
Relationality*



The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities, Stoke on Trent: Craftsmen from Armitage Shanks Factory specially form the porcelain bench mould from standard urinal moulds.

can art contribute to a safer more social environment? We made a design proposal that was also a strategy for involving the wider client body, the people who live and work in the town. We wanted to make visible the lost industrial culture of the pottery towns: to reveal it as *the place where the hands of the person sitting next to you on the bus are the hands of the person who shaped the plate from which you eat your dinner*. The proposal was to work with the workforce of the Armitage Shanks sanitary-ware factory to create two pieces of street furniture in the form of fragments of an oversize dinner patterned plate, situated in a landscape of white birch trees and white roses. The benches were made as a collaborative exercise by members of muf and *Armitage Shanks* working together in the factory, and were officially deemed as 'free-order' items supplied by the company and workforce. For the first month after completion video projects were also shown on an adjacent wall to the bench constellation. These were of the portraits of workers at the factory, and also of other local people, gathered as part of an associated art project called *What Men Do* looking at the local sport cultures of rugby and greyhound racing.

The *Pleasure Garden* foregrounds the way in which artists approach the 'problem' of the public realm differently to those within the domain of architecture and urbanism. As Ashley McCormick writes

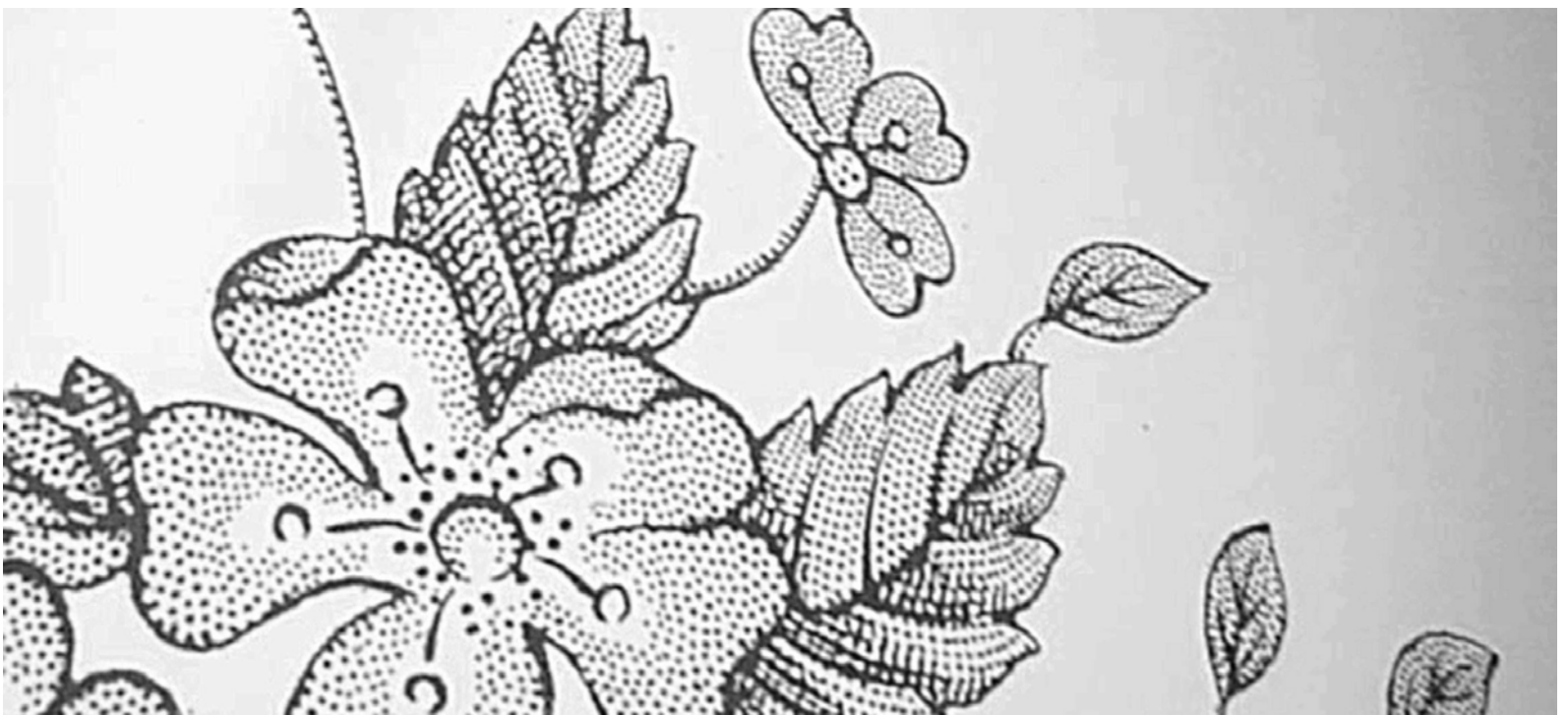
'It often happens that the artist working with the community gets the 'hard bits' of regeneration, confronting ordinary peoples alienation on estates with high unemployment, the greatest drug abuse and the most derelict physical fabric. However, because artists aren't social workers, maintenance officers or drug counsellors, we are

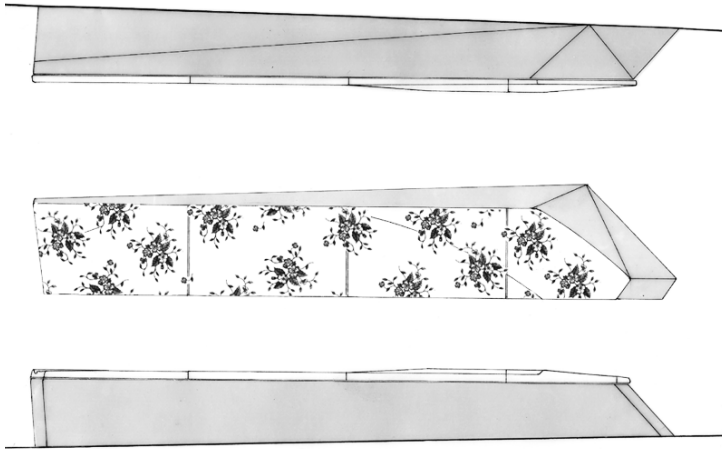
liberated from the necessity to see these 'hard bits' as problematic in the same recognisable terms as the other teams involved. Uniquely amongst those concerned with the quality of urban life, artist are not required to produce solutions.' (Ashley McCormick, in conversation)

The artist working in socially engaged practice can assume the role of the canary down the pit; they may gauge the atmosphere and assess the creative potential of a community, as well as connect and consolidate a constituency through projects and actions. The issue is less about solving the problem of ram-raiding (arguably impossible), than asking public questions which begin to bring to the surface the issues at stake. In considering the lost industrial tradition of employment and pride in the pottery towns, the project became about valuing a physical sense of place that had lost value. The porcelain benches have not to this day been vandalised.

The over-scaled but delicate physical manifestations of a lost industrial heritage are poignant parts of the Pleasure Garden project by Katherine Clarke. Re-thinking the problem, of course, allowed a trajectory that segued from the social problems of delinquency, towards a more complex conception that considers 'work' in its positive manifestation (the pottery industry) as an essence of the cultural landscape of a place. But in addition, the material and aesthetic collaborations at the factory, whilst a dialogical

The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities, Stoke on Trent: A fragment of the porcelain with blueware decorative transfer.





The Pleasure Garden of the Utilities, Stoke on Trent: Drawings of public benches with cast concrete base and specially made porcelain glazed top seat. The bench top is formed to represent a fragment of a plate at giant scale.

Sennett R (2008) *The Craftsman*

art process, are also a profoundly physical creative one also. Sennett (2008) the sociologist, in a series of reflections on the damage to the social fabric caused by the reigning economic systems, has written of the value of 'craft' as a form of labour which allows an everyday negotiation between ideas and things,

'Every good craftsman conducts a dialogue between concrete practices and thinking; this dialogue evolves into sustaining habits, and these habits establish a rhythm between problem solving and problem finding.' (Sennett, 2008 p 9)

The *Pleasure Garden* project is exemplary because of the way it connects both a relational process of reflective dialogue with local people (the factory workers at Armitage Shanks; men at the greyhound racing track; local footballers) to a material process of making, designing, creating and transforming. In this early project, it seems that the role of artist has not only allowed the 'architect' a way of stepping outside of the practical problems of public space; it has also enabled a luxurious reverie on materiality and physicality despite the anxieties about pragmatics, social dysfunction and urban decay. Avoiding the deterministic pull of 'problem-solving' for the public realm seems one of the artists most valuable persona's, when adopted by architects. I struggle with this lesson to this day when trying to behave like an artist.

These reflections on the visual, the spatial and the material aspects of artworks are relevant to current discourse on relational art and its mode of operation. Some critics have sought to grapple specifically with a definition and critique of the visual and spatial aspects of dialogical artworks.

Lacy (1995) made clear that the relational artwork was a 'tableau vivant'; a mise en scene for interaction that is as much spatial as visual. And yet much critique since has focused exclusively on the social and ethical components of work, as if the quality of the formal content, whatever that may consist of, is simply a means to an end. Bishop draws attention to this (2006) and points out that avoiding the physical characteristics of such projects is problematic, and that an expanded analysis of the aesthetic is needed. Bourriaud, in his short book *Relational Aesthetics*, began to ask the question, what is artist's form today? His writing has come to be seen as a defining text for the generation of relational artists coming to prominence in the mid 1990's. His predominant argument is to reinforce the 'relational' aspects of art as necessary in a contemporary and commodified society in which inter-human relations are increasingly impoverished,

'Contemporary art is really pursuing a political project when it attempts to move into the relational sphere by problematizing it' (Bourriaud 1998).

So he says that *'art is the space that produces a specific sociability.'*

Bourriaud, N (1998) Relational Aesthetics

And yet although Bourriaud defines this as a space and an aesthetic, he recognizes it as one which looks suspiciously like our everyday world,

'...utopia is now experienced as a day to day subjectivity, in the real time of concrete and deliberately fragmentary experiments. The artworks now looks like a social interstice'.

Bourriaud, N (1998) Relational Aesthetics

Artists are creating relational spaces that elaborate moments of conviviality, trying to 'shake off the constraints of the ideology of mass communication'. In this sense, 'art no longer tries to represent utopias; it is trying to construct concrete spaces'. Drawing on Guattari, he does acknowledge the critical question of how an aesthetics of the everyday can be used, 'can it possibly be injected into tissues that have been rigidified by the capitalist economy?' in the process appreciating that it requires the production of a subjectivity that refreshes and adjusts our normal relationship with the world.

If Bourriaud begins to acknowledge some of the tangible ingredients requires to deeply subjectify our everyday world he stops short of delving into the qualities of the 'concrete spaces' that stage the life-structures he discusses as relational aesthetics. He does recognize the role of the double agency of the artist, which he calls a 'deceptive aura'; an agency that resists commodified distribution or, alternately, becomes its parasite – understanding the dangers of working within the model of the real world for creative practitioners. If you like, his response to his own question (What is artists form today?) might be not only that there is an instability and diversity to their concept of form, but also that 'form' can be the social interstice created by the artwork.

The philosopher Ranciere has written extensively on the subjects of aesthetics and politics and is critical of the claims of relational art to repair social bonds. He considers the aesthetic and spatial as profoundly important because of their ability to foreground the invisible and contested complexity of our existence. As he says: 'the aesthetic is the ability to think contradiction' and by this measure the aesthetic aspects of the practice are predicated on the idea of arts autonomy; its position as one removed from instrumental rationality. In this respect art operates as a provocateur. He identifies the issue of complicity and double agency as follows,

'Because of this crossing of the borders and status changes between art and non-art, the radical strangeness of the art object, and the active appropriation of the common world have been able to come together and constitute the third way of a micro-politics of art' (Ranciere 2006 pp65-84).

Ranciere J (2004) *Problems and Transformations in Critical Art*

He sees the issue as one of a set of games and displacements between worlds of art and non-art, and he likens this to the lineage of the modernist collage (from the DaDa canvases of detritus, to Krzysztof Wodiczko's projections of homeless figures onto American monuments), and also the idea of the mystery which 'emphasizes the kinship of the heterogenous' and, rather than a form of symbolism, he sees as 'the border between the familiar and the strange, the real and the symbolic' (Ranciere *ibid*). This 'un-decidability' seems a characteristic of the aesthetic operations when art and real life are such close compan-

ions, and this has been noted in architectural discourse with the tracing of the 'uncanny' in which the instrument of de-familiarization becomes a tool of formal exploration (Vidler 1992).

muf have, from an early stage, remarked on the territory of the strangely familiar as one that the projects inhabit. Numerous projects such as *Barking Town Square* (2005-2008 Thames Gateway, UK), *What do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* (2008-ongoing Hastings, Australia) and the *Pleasure Garden* (1998 Stoke-on-Trent UK) deliberately use the inventory of the ordinary and the found - collected rubbish, laborers and school children, architectural salvage and apprentices, sanitary-ware, factory workers and urinal slabs - as the ingredients for re-constituted spatial arrangements which embody the 'familiar made strange'. The tableaux created, combinations of the temporary event and the permanent installation, always seek to present the ordinary as extra-ordinary. This understanding of how social and political actions and outcomes in architecture (engaging in the ordinary aspects of culture) might be manifested through a formal language of 'extra-ordinary' dimensions was utilized to curate the *2010 AIA National Conference*, which, as Creative Director, I titled 'extra/ordinary' (architecture.com.au/extraordinary). The conference

Barking Town Square, Thames Gateway: The Barking Folly is an artwork constructed from architectural salvage by apprentice bricklayers, and forms one edge to the new town square, disguising the Iceland Supermarket's blank wall.



included a range of international and Australian practitioners whose work was marked by this creative dialectic including *FAT* (Fashion Architecture Taste, London), *Edmond + Corrigan* (Melbourne); *Elemental* (Chile); *Teddy Cruz* (California); *Richard Goodwin* (Sydney) and *Ole Bouman* (Netherlands).



Images of projects from practitioners at the 'extra/ordinary National Architecture Conference 2010.

*Left: The Villa in Hoogvliet, Netherlands by FAT
Right: VCA Drama School, Melbourne by Edmond + Corrigan*

From a different but equally relevant position Katrin Bohm (*Lang + Bohm*) has also reflected on what an aesthetic of socially engaged art practice might mean. Tired of the critique regarding the intangible outcomes of architecture projects operating relationally, she complains that there is an absence of critical frameworks for a consideration of the success or failure of the spatial components of such projects: an absence of 'a framework for verbalizing or visualizing the space of relational art'. This absence perpetuates the boundary between the formal and the social in cultural practices. In some respects she argues the point that the 'social' can be formal, and that there is a spatiality to the dialogical that is not only related to temporal definitions of space. What is required is a language for spatiality, which is not currently described through existing typologies of the street, the house, the park and so forth, but which is rather based on spatial and temporal incursions. Of course, although such languages may be present in the diagrammatic representation of space and time produced by practitioners (a good example is the mappings produced by muf for Scarman Trust projects, as well as *Lang + Bohm's* own diagrammatic transcriptions of their *Park Products* projects in Hyde Park) the bigger issue is how these spatial compositions can be understood as a

new paradigm for urban planning policy;

'architecture requires an emancipation from the conventions of medium focused production which art has achieved' (Bohm 2009).

Bohm K (2009) *Who Is Building What?*

As Rendell concurs;

'In architecture, to position a building as a methodology rather than an end result, is a radical proposition' (Rendell 2006 p161).

Rendell J (2006) *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*

How to build a framework for an aesthetic critique of the relational or dialogical creative work is part of the dilemma for architects who work within this domain, because of the question of whether, and how, it has an aesthetic value in this way.

The role of the artist, as a part of the designer, throws up rich territory that leaks sideways into other roles described already. By presenting both the tradition of interactive art as a legacy for contemporary relational art practice, as well as describing its current practitioners and their dilemmas, the aim has been to situate the context for the role of artist at muf and muf_aus. Evidently for many practitioners, the slippage into architecture and urbanism, as well as regeneration, has provoked the issue of definition. When is 'artist-behaving' artist like, and when is it a mere mimesis of, mainstream life and situation? This question is relevant for a critique of the practice, but also allows a more positive interpretation of the struggle. For us, projects that deliberately place themselves within the bind of being complicit, seem to have the most resonance as artworks and designed pieces of public realm. As Sola-Morales Rubio notes:

Conclusion

'We should treat the residual city with a contradictory complicity that will not shatter the elements that maintain its continuity in time and space' (Sola-Morales Rubio 1995).

Sola-Morales Rubio I (1995) *Terrain Vague in 'Anyplace'*

Barking Town Square (2005-2008 Thames Gateway, UK) is a project literally nestling beneath the 'spin' of regeneration politics in the Thames Gateway. As a project it is fragmented through a series of sites which are adjacent

and within the Alford Hall Monaghan Morris 'Barking Central' redevelopment by Redrow Regeneration (2008). Yet through a carefully composed aesthetic of familiarity and strangeness, a series of tableaux of fake history have been laid over a mainstream regeneration scheme. Complicity and independence are ever-present touchstones in projects for muf and muf_aus. Negotiating distance for projects that are situated in mainstream urban and social policy, means deliberately isolating out the misused, the undervalued, and the problematic and reinterpreting them in a positive light. This is exemplified through the discovery of 'cubby-building' in West Park (*What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* 2008), or the discovery of horses in Tilbury (*A Horses Tale* 2003-2005).

The conception of the role of double agent rears its head again, though here as less facilitator than a translator. Gillian Rose has identified that

Rose G (1997) *Performing the Inoperative Community in Pile S, Keith (1997) Geographies of Resistance*

'the discourse of the community arts worker is marked by a kind of doubled-ness' (Rose 1997 p192).

Through a close evaluation of relational artwork process, Rose found that there was, on the part of artists, a refusal to discuss the 'form' of the work, but rather to see it only as in its value to the community and their ability, as articulated by the artist, to 'find a voice' for the community through the work. The products of the artwork were understood as moments of communication not as representation. Artists were avoiding discursive legibility as an act of resistance: they refused the power of discourse when they avoided describing the product of the project. And yet in other ways, artists were clear and up front about the way they needed to 'play the game' in terms of funding applications, representing the aims and ambitions for the projects in terms of social transformation to ensure success.

Rose G (1997) *Performing the Inoperative Community in Pile S, Keith (1997) Geographies of Resistance*

'This non-space of a politics of non-representation has methodological implications. It suggests that a radical politics is not always articulated through words but that silence and absence also constitute critique. It suggests that coding and categorizing should not be the method for invoking this politics' (Rose 1997 p 202).

The artists' behavior operates as a type of translation between the public, the worlds of art and the mainstream. Again this returns us to previous comments which understand the value of the artists persona as a person who stands outside, seeing the situation differently:

'Artists, arguably, have the ability to comprehend and synthesize these broader inter-relations because they are not limited by the technical expertise required by specific areas and can move easily between, seeing them as inter-related parts of a larger whole' (Kester 2004 p67).

Kester G (2004) Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art

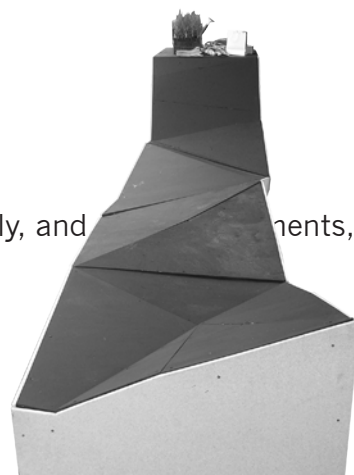
Kester describes this a 'topographic ability'. In this respect artists have the ability to exercise a self-reflexive critique for a situation into which they insert themselves, assisting others to make the artwork more about a 'projective enterprise rather than a descriptive enterprise, when a provisional community can be produced within a specific context' (Kwon 2004 p163). The relational project is therefore productive and creative, through its reflective content.

The artist-behaving in our practice does not attack institutions frontally, rather infiltrates them and uses their own instruments. In this respect the artist practitioner oscillates between two traditions within interactive and relational art, as defined by Bishop. The authored tradition operates as a disruptive form of intervention, provoking the participant into engagement. In this tradition, the formal qualities of the work in terms of its material, its aesthetic and its spatiality are used to provoke an audience, either during or after construction. The theatrical horse mask parade at Tilbury (*A Horses Tale*, UK); the fairground stalls in West Park (*DIY Park Hastings*, Australia); are deliberately strange, yet also familiar as magnifications or distortions of a found condition.

*DIY Park, Hastings:
A community event constructed alternative fairground props for children to appropriate, inspired by childrens cubby models.*



ely, and elements, the de-au



1



age embraces collective creativity and is constructive and ameliorative. Here the digital story workshops with children at West Park (*DIY Park*);, or the Horse Poster workshops at Tilbury (*A Horses Tale*, UK) foreground the participant as producer. Whilst there is critical discussion about the value of the two approaches, perhaps the virtue of using both, allows a creative uncertainty and dialectic between the two. In fact they often co-exist in projects, providing the power of 'both/and' rather than 'either/or'.

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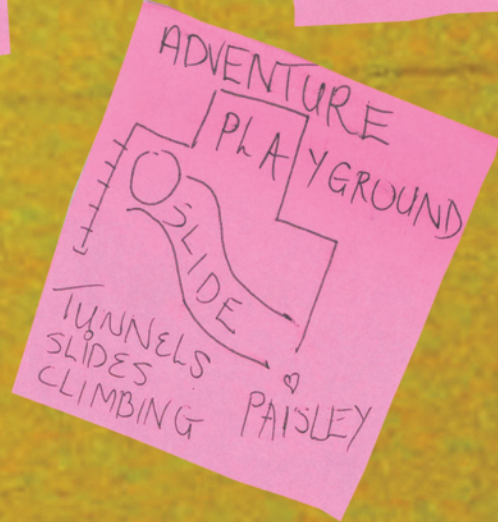
The Policy Maker

Lolly Pops

To have
roller
coaster!

Cubby
in back traks

Roller coaster



More seats
for the park

Goal posts
in the park

Pony

I wish for a
flying fox

a trampoline
in the park

to help all
wildlife
and conservation
in Hastings
and Ashford

more

community
activity

to make
a monsoon

climbing trees

That the back-
traces get like
a path, or just
leave the same

roller coaster

Introduction

For me, there has always been a provocative and perverse mismatch between the scale of the architectural work the practice of muf and muf_aus has undertaken, and the extent of our ambition for the city. On the one hand the physical projects occupy the very smallest scale of street furniture, fragments of pavement, temporary installations and small rooms or pavilions. On the other, each project has sought to include and make space for the extended creative potential of local people; their emotional, economic and political infrastructures; and the schools, clubs, agencies, work places, and everyday world around about them; what might officially be called an urban policy or strategy. The critic and muf collaborator Kath Shonfield articulated this in the publication *This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual* :

'How do you develop a citywide strategy when you are fascinated by the detail of things? And how can you make something small-scale in the here and now if you are driven by the urge to formulate strategic proposals for the future?' (Shonfield, 2001, p.14)

Shonfield K 'Premature Gratification and Other Pleasures in *This is What We Do: A Muf Manual*' (2001) Ed muf

She goes on to develop an argument and formula that has been situated within the practice ever since, and which tries to answer her own question through an understanding of the projects undertaken up until 2001. The muf formula is detail/strategy = DETAIL: the utopian projections of strategy are simultaneously understood through the transformation of a tiny bit of the here and now:

'So strategy derives from the up close and personal, and DETAIL from an up-close look at a strategic What If?'

Shonfield K (ibid p 17)

So the physical detail of the project holds a bigger intent and strategy for the city. In fact what the equation also articulates is that muf's work occupies a space or gap in conventional city and urban design: a gap between the bigger ideas and ambitions, versus the concrete reality of everyday things. This is reminiscent of one of the popular images from muf's archive, a photograph of a crude cardboard sign in a wheat field. On the sign is a question, handwritten in felt-tip: *'How Are Thoughts Made Into Things?'* This seemingly simple statement reveals a more sophisticated problem, which in fact goes to the heart of contemporary dilemmas about how we might think about



An image from On The Buses, Kent UK (2000) by muf, a research project to investigate the relationship between visual experience and thinking, in which interventions were made along a bus route.

Muf (2007) An Invisible Privilege in 'Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space

and design cities, and the public objects and spaces within them. The scale of conventional city planning often operates at the mid to upper range; a distinctly 'top-down' envisaging of urban places and spaces. But day-to-day life is a physical and tangible experience at the scale of the 1:1. *How Are Thoughts Made Into Things?* is an understanding of the need to both conflate and synthesize very intimate things with bigger less tangible ideas in the city; as Juliet Bidgood, a founder partner of muf, proposes as, 'the understanding of the personal as political and the expansion of this principle as a method of brief development' (muf 2007 p67).

This is not a conflation of scales of practice that is about turning the intimate and personal into a generic policy statement. Rather the reverse, it is about understanding that policy needs to be an intimate and personal act: an act of the designer.

Defined in this way, behaving as a policy maker or strategist is an approach that weaves through the projects, but which, unlike the role of the artist in the last chapter, is of-

ten left unvoiced in shorter descriptions of it as an art and architecture studio. Why is urban planning and policy so fascinating and necessary in design practice for the public realm, and yet so problematic?

This is a dilemma that numerous urban practitioners have identified when they reflect on the quality of the city and how to intervene within it: it is also an area which scholarship and criticism has dwelt on since cities have been conceived as designed territories. The tyranny of generalization that seems to accompany urban design often derives from the application of a rule based or methodological approach; the top down 'birds eye' view of the urban planner necessarily converts the rich and individual peculiarities of daily life into categories and orders which smooth out difference, and accentuate the norm. Digesting the scale of the city seems to unfortunately mean resorting to metric data and developing standards; a commodification of our naturally plural existences. The everyday urbanism of daily life is a cacophony of lived and temporal experiences which are much harder to pin down, as Kaliski explains,

'the city of daily life is simply difficult to incorporate into built work given the means and concepts that architects usually use' (Kaliski 2008 p 102).

Kaliski J (2008) *The Present City and the Practice of City Design* in 'Everyday Urbanism' Ed Chase, Crawford, Kaliski

He is critical of the tendencies of some designers to resort to the universal, in situations which require the highly specific;

'at the moment when the construction of everyday architectural things is necessary to the city design process, the urban designer who utilizes systems and the architect who seeks to order conceptually, become practitioners of the general, and fall back on policy, guidelines and facilitation' (Kaliski 2008 p 104).

Kaliski J (2008) *ibid*

Here is clearly a reference to the problems of the policy maker as a universalist. In a similar vein James Holsten, an anthropologist and city commentator, refers to a 'confession of illiteracy' (Holsten 1995 p 256) when he considers how we might find a way to design the city, referencing Aldo Van Eyck's assertion that:

'we know nothing of vast multiplicity – we cannot come to grips with it – not as architects, as planners, or anyone

Holsten J (1995) *Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship Planning Theory* 13: 35-51

else. But if society has no form how can architects build its counter-form?’ (Aldo van Eyck quoted in Frampton 1980, cited by Holsten J p 276-277).

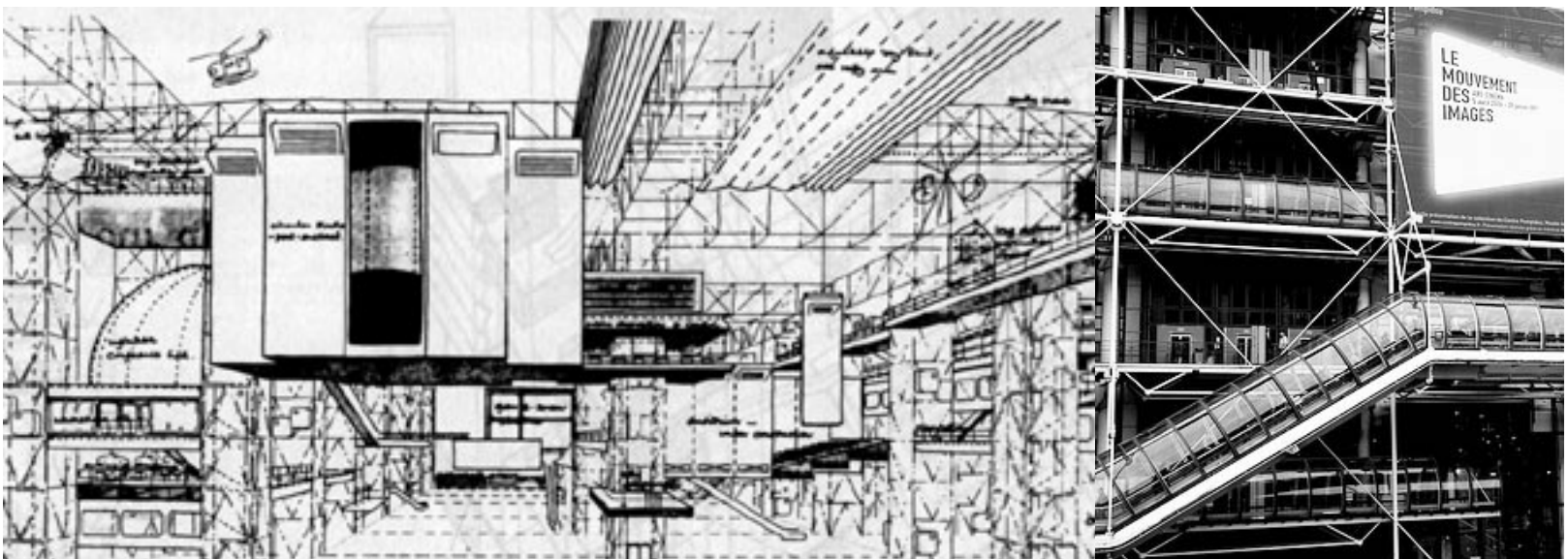
Certainly early phases of modernism focused on the ideology of the organized and utopian city and enshrined their ‘policy’ into form in countless city schemes which have often since been discredited. Of course and equally there have been modernist practitioners who have not only recognized this phenomena, but actively attempted to work against it, not least Cedric Price, who was only too aware of his own (and architecture’s) limitations with respect to the city;

Price C (1966) ‘Potteries Thinkbelt’ *Architectural Design* 36 pp 483-497

‘the role of architecture as a provider of visually recognizable symbols of identity, place and activity becomes an attractive excuse for architects to revel in their personal dexterity, aesthetic sensibility and spatial awareness...it is incomprehensible and irrelevant’. (Price 1966 p483)

Image of Cedric Price’s Unbuilt Fun Palace, 1961, East London, Initiated with Joan Littlewood, the theatre director and founder of the innovative Theatre Workshop in east London, the idea was to build a ‘laboratory of fun’ with facilities for dancing, music, drama and fireworks. Its influence can be seen in the Pompidou Centre by Rogers and Piano.

Price’s work attempted to intervene in the city through a combination of cybernetic theory and planning; information and communications technologies which would, he hoped, form an ‘accidental environment’ which would be a space that encourage and allow chance encounters. Price’s notion of ‘calculated uncertainty’ is critical of the fixity of urban policy enshrined in form and it captured the approach of systematic planning on the one hand and the subsequent giving over to chance of the end result on the other hand; a rule-governed processes of production that sought to liberate rather than constrain creative engagement.



The Fun Factory was of course an attempt to build a city block founded on mutability and uncertainty that allowed the richness of daily life to flourish within its malleable infrastructures. Not surprisingly, despite its sophisticated intentions towards mutability, the implemented reality was a mixed success (Inter/Action Centre Kentish Town 1971-79, London) although it certainly inspired other examples (Pompidou Centre Paris, by Rogers, Piano 1977).

The dilemma of architecture's ability to materialize a fixed ideology all too easily at the utopian level has perhaps been relieved by more recent discourse in contemporary politics and urbanism characterized by a turning against meta-theories and ideologies entirely. However this has introduced our contemporary dilemma; how as architects and city designers we might act in a way that accommodates flexibility, multiplicity and the uncertain. Before answering that question, it's important to define what this might actually mean.

The contemporary realm of policy, and the strategic, is characterized by the extent to which the meta-narratives of modernism have been discredited by a more complex politics of post-modernism built on uncertainty and contingency. In Harvey's *The Condition of Post-Modernity* (1989) we are presented with a narrative of twentieth century society that moves from the universalizing meta-theories and ideologies of early capitalism, to the ephemeral, fleeting and contingent conditions of post-modernism. Although Harvey is nervous of this loss of 'eternal truths' rendering society in a state of flux and open to the abuses of an entrepreneurial market culture, other cultural thinkers see the passage as a necessary and positive one for a more pluralist notion of politics. Thinkers of the new left, for example Chantal Mouffe and Ernest Laclau, acknowledge that a more complex condition lies at the heart of society's sense of itself, that

'a multiplicity of subject positions constitute a single agent, and the possibility that this multiplicity can be antagonistic' means that consensus is an impossible ambition (Mouffe 1993 p12).

This rejection of the rationalist conception of the unitary

Multiplicity, Complexity, Uncertainty

Mouffe C (1993) *The Return of the Political*



subject supports an anti-universalist framework of contextualism or agonistic pluralism that accepts that there is no society without difference and antagonism.

An approach that embraces plurality and contradiction certainly seems to concur with our experiences of designing in local communities, where everyone seems to want something different. In the project *Shared Ground* in Southwark, consultation was a requirement of the brief, but there seemed to be a tacit limit to how far one could go, a fear of raising expectations or giving the impression that everyone's demands could be met. The project balanced on the edge of the abject territory that the public realm had become; a place where anything can happen but often nothing ever does (because no one can decide what). We began talking to people in the street, in their houses, in shops, offices and cafes. Each time calling on the next person someone mentioned. We spoke to over 100 people, recording them on video, and in the process revealing their *One Hundred Desires for Southwark Street* as a film piece for a public exhibition. People who lived and worked in the area spoke not only to us about their individual thoughts and desires, but also through the video to one another and the larger political bodies that were responsible for the implementation of the proposals.

Mouffe's reflections on broader political theory and democracy are relevant in considering how on earth such diversity might be accommodated. In *The Democratic Paradox* she seeks to explore new ways of theorizing the political, ways which break with the universality, and homogeneity, of most liberal theory and which embrace a contextual approach to human coexistence. She argues this is essential in order to consolidate and deepen democratic institutions (for example, city planning):

'we should not only acknowledge but also valorize the diversity of ways in which the 'democratic game' can be played instead of trying to reduce it through the imposition of a uniform understanding of citizenship. This means fostering the institutions that would allow for a plurality of ways in which the democratic rules can be followed. There cannot be one single 'best' rational way to obey those rules and this is precisely such a recognition that is constitutive of a pluralist democracy. 'Following a rule' says Wittgenstein 'is analogous to obeying an or-

der. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one way, and another in another to the order and the training? Which one is right?' This is indeed a crucial question for democratic theory....space needs to be provided for the many different practices in which obedience to democratic rules can be inscribed.'(Mouffe 2000).

Mouffe C (2000) 'Wittgenstein, Political Theory and Democracy' in Polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy

Of course, if a democratic ethos and values are not imposed from above (a meta-theory) then citizenship needs to be constructed from below and we need to conceive of a mode of political association which, although having 'commonality' also allows the individual to construct their own political identity. Mouffe draws on Oakeshott (Mouffe 1993) to consider how such a 'societas' might be defined as 'a practice of agents working towards civility but not necessarily a universal interest'. Wittgenstein has further examined how this democracy might play out, by understanding democracy not as a substance, but as a set of procedures and practices constituting specific forms of individuality and identity inscribed in shared forms of life. In this sense, although these procedures have linkages and commonality, they are not rules or principles formed objectively, but rather emerge from everyday practicing ethics.

Clearly these thoughts are directly relevant to us as city designers and policymakers because they present a conundrum. Unlike the universalising principles of, say, a mid twentieth century health and social policy based on technically rational principles of fresh air and light - which can (and was) implemented quite pragmatically through home building programs with certain technical specifications - the implementation of a strategy to embrace 'difference', for example could be seen as perverse and paradoxical. Can one strategise multiplicity and variety at all? Or provide the policy position for difference, when in the very process this will impose a regime that inevitably defines difference in some objective way? In fact does plurality render policy obsolete and if so how can we proceed?

The *Mass Observation Movement* in the UK (1937-48, revived in 1981) made some attempts to devise an alternate method of considering society that embraced difference. Rather than a series of generalised classifications derived from census data, their technique was benign but foren-

The Mass Observation Movement, a social research movement founded in 1937: methodology and publication.

sic, asking millions of people to provide documentation of everyday aspects of life including topics as diverse as recording of graffiti, doodles, café menus, and routes to work via directives, day diaries and collections of daily items. Clearly this quasi-political movement (founded by artist, journalists and anthropologists) was deliberate in its intent to reveal difference, and in the process provided a subversively eccentric model. The question of if, and how, to digest such archives and allow them to inform a type of intimate and localized policy is less straightforward.



Foucault also understood that that what was required was a 'localized power discourse', in which power was not in the state, but in the infinitesimal mechanisms of localities, contexts and situations; in other words a 'heterotopia' consisting of the 'co-existence of a large number of fragmentary possible worlds' (Foucault). Lyotard describes this as an 'atomization of the social into flexible networks' (Lyotard 1979) each having different codes of acting depending on the situations in which people found themselves. Certainly recent commentators, who write from a position of urban and city design practices, have tried to understand this pragmatically within the contemporary city as a multicultural and plural domain in which;

Sandercock L (2003) Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century

'qualities of difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity and pluralism exist' (Sandercock 2003 p 37).

Such practitioners call for a new approach in city institu-

tions; *'planning with multiple publics requires a new type of democratic politics; more participatory, more deliberative and more agonistic'* (Sandercock 2003).

But what might this look like? Harvey has drawn attention to the paradox and dilemma of how to consider space and the city in the light of geographies of resistance and difference;

'if social life is to be rationally planned and controlled so as to promote social equality and the welfare of all, then how can production, consumption and social interaction be planned and efficiently organized except through the incorporation of the ideal abstraction of space and time as given in the map' (Harvey 1990 p 253).

Harvey D (1990) *The Condition of Post-Modernity*

Other architects have noted the difficulty of operating within this bind. Koolhaas (Oswalt 2005) claims that, since 1945, architecture's strong bond with politics has declined and architects (including himself) have increasingly served private interests. This may be because change is required at a societal level: new forms of finance, new sponsors, new clients, new models of taxation and new concepts for institutions that distribute and decentralize policy to a local (and differentiated) level. Does this mean that there are infrastructures beyond building that are first required, before architecture can take its part in a pluralistic practice of city design? Such an assumption would seem to remove architects from the domain of city design, leaving it up to policy makers and politicians completely.

If we put aside political theory as a place to find answers for a moment, and move toward political practice, what policy frameworks actually exist that might be seen to grapple with the condition of multiplicity and pluralism in society? Indeed can contemporary urban policy even be seen to enshrine such complex and ambitious ideas? Certainly many recent ambitions by government link closely with wider cultural trends observed by social commentators, which reveal what can be seen as a dissolution of 'community' in the capitalist West and the need to have resilient and robust social networks capable of responding positively to change and growth, multiplicity and diversity. The concept of *'social capital'* plays a role in many contemporary urban contexts although it is a slippery term. Orig-

Governance and Empowerment

nally developed by Bourdieu, he used it to describe the relationships between people and the way in which such relationships allow power to be leveraged within community networks:

Bourdieu, P. (1986) The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.) Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education

'social obligations or 'connections', which are convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243).

Although originally neutral in its connotations of community it was expanded and mutated into political science by others including Putnam, who used it to describe the qualities of social networks in terms of positive connotations of community social health: as he defines it:

Putnam, R (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.

'features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995, p. 67).

The metrics of social capital and increasing social capital is seen as a 'goal' for communities as a way to reverse social decline, but it is not clear whether the ambition is fundamentally at odds with pluralism, or supportive of it. Ambitions for social capital are also embedded in related political practice, including third way politics, which are essentially ways in which social democracy has attempted to renew itself within an open market economy in the last twenty years. The third way (developed by Giddens 1998) concerns itself with social capital, social entrepreneurs, public-private partnerships and the enabling state. Crucial to this policy narrative is the idea of a 'double reflexivity' or dialogical understanding of democracy in which the state enables citizens towards social inclusion and equality, rather than protecting and supporting them through the welfare state; in the process, essentially resolving the states' sustained financial troubles in the persistence of weak economies and demographic change. In some respects, this concept of double reflexivity could be argued to encourage pluralism, and the multiplicity of the self. In a similar way, Foucault's term 'governmentality' was a comprehensive sense of the many diverse techniques of conducting oneself, and others; moving beyond the idea of the state to a consideration of management at the scale of the household, the children, the self. For Foucault,

'Governance' requires a mobilization of players and a 'growing interest in the process and problems of constituting players in civil society' (Foucault 1991 p).

Foucault M (1991) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*

How this nuanced idea of governance descends to the individual, is part of the conundrum of third way politics which have shifted emphasis toward social connected-ness and 'community building initiatives' based on 'citizen participation'. The policies reveal an intention to increase involvement of non-government agencies and devolve power to communities to avoid the bureaucratic, paternalistic (and expensive) socialism of the post war era. So changes to the welfare state and the delivery of public programmes (characterised by, for example, the New Deal for Communities initiative in the UK) see community participation as a key social policy ambition, encapsulating 'third way' politics. In these contexts practices of participation and community involvement have been embraced and have become the new orthodoxy. But questions arise because there are inherent problems with empowerment when imposed from above. Cauchi and Murphy, in the unpublished paper *Whats Wrong with Community Building?* identify the problems of practically implementing these policies:

'Most of the problems with community building are based on a lack of understanding of what it is, but more especially how to do it. Pursuers of government funding are far more skilled in stating project intentions than they are in pursuing project goals. The fundamental principles underpinning community building are based largely on approaches that emphasize self-determination and self-reliance; that communities need to be empowered to manage their own affairs. Most of the current policies and programs have been imposed upon communities rather than having emanated from them. Government has a far better understanding of the basic theory of community building than they do its complex practice.' (Cauchi and Murphy 2004).

Murphy, J. and Cauchi, J. (2004) *'Whats Wrong with Community Building: Its much worse than we thought'* Human Rights, Community Development and the Grass-roots Conference.

As Knorr-Siedow points out in his essay *The Activating State* the problem of state initiated participation is counter to the principles of empowering communities, since actions should not be dictated from above according to an ideology (even an ideology of participation, for example) but instead need to be derived from below: 'a demand

side urban policy' (Knorr Siedow). Certainly the conflation of cause and effect in social capital and 'third way' policy initiatives, idealizes the positive benefits of civic networks, and ignore the negative, so that it is seen, sometimes uncritically, as a panacea. Increasingly, the neo-liberal spin on ideas of community and social connect-ness actually has the effect of turning the concept of pluralism on its head. Amin notes that since 9/11 the growing tendency toward 'cohesion' policies, couched in terms of 'inclusive citizenship', has inexorably shifted discipline and control into the rhetoric of the third way policies of empowerment. It seems that the physical concept of community as a cohesive entity, has turned more complex ideas about our multiple worlds and networks of association, affiliation and identity into a blunter idea of the 'face-to-face' and physical adjacency as kind of unity and homogeneity. We return to the problems of community discussed in the previous chapter *The Artist*, where the 'ideal of community also suppresses difference between subjects and groups' (Young 1990).

Our experiences of working within the policy environments of NDC, and *Neighbourhood Renewal* only reinforce these comments. Project officers, place managers and community development workers often struggle with the reality of diversity as an inconvenient interruption to mainstream 'community-building' with a well behaved core of residents. In projects like Tilbury (2003-2005 *The Horses Tale*) the diversity of the gipsy culture of horses was completely ignored as a component of the brief for the new public space, only to be uncovered in site analysis. In Hastings (2007-2008 *DIY Park*), staff developed strategies to avoid the difficult and combative residents through tactics of avoidance. In a recent discussion about the siting of a public entrance to a park, the place manager expressed the opinion that a site next to a particular resident's house was problematic because she was uncooperative and troublesome in the neighbourhood renewal initiative. These omissions are sometimes the natural outcomes of the difficult work involved in 'empowering' local people. The empowered are arguably usually those who attend the meetings, and already have the latent skills to take a role within the community, as Till notes (Till 2006) whereas the genuinely disenfranchised and excluded, remain so.

Given the considerable problems of implementing policy through governmental and institutional initiatives, what are the ways in which the practice of architecture at muf and muf_aus have intervened in policy, and is this any more successful? How can the multiplicity and difference, the uncertainty and contingency of real life be captured and nurtured in the city? Perhaps an intimate policy maker, rather than devising a solution, should be allowed to make a mess?

It is always necessary, but hard, to write about policy because of the retreat into the abstract. This seems to be a useful lesson for practice as well, where keeping a tangible grip on the concrete issues of materiality and space may be the best method of retaining the focus. Perhaps the best way that muf and muf_aus have found to begin a consideration of policy in practice is to consider the site of the project as a piece of policy itself: a physical place in which policy is latent, revealing the actual nature of multiplicity, diversity and pluralism in a place. Developing the policy is therefore a revealing of what is there, rather than an imposition of what is not.

For the practice, our site has always been the public realm, which we use as a term that expands beyond the term 'public space' (and its associated normative references to parks and public squares). In comparison we might define the public realm as a predominantly physical construct but not fixed formally, spatially or temporally. Countless commentators have attempted to define the public realm as a domain that is subject to diverse uses, a place of encounter and conflict and a site of negotiation and translation. Of course these definitions are loose and generous enough to allow the public realm to be many things. Arendt defines the term public realm in her book *The Human Condition* (Arendt 1998 p 52) in terms of the place of shared ground:

'To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it. The world, like every in-between, relates and separates man at the same time'. (Arendt 1998 p 52)

Finding the Public Realm

Arendt H (1998) *The Human Condition*

This is a useful description for the public realm not only

because it concretises the experience of the public realm as furniture (see Book A *Benches, Tables Grounds*), but also because it acknowledges this as the space that simultaneously gathers us together and separates us. Arendt goes on to also characterise the public realm as a

Arendt H (1998) *The Human Condition*

'boundary line, which in ancient times was still actually a space between the public and the private, sheltering and protecting both realms, while at the same time separating them from each other' (Arendt *ibid* p 63).

This combination of separation and gathering, materialised as physical things is a rather beautiful way of explaining the diversity and antagonism of the public realm, and also of the techniques which allow the physical characteristics of separation and gathering to be revealed, celebrated, and drawn out within our projects.

Other commentators have provided useful lateral definitions of how a complex and large-scale understanding of society, might be encapsulated in a physical construct, like the street. Marshall Berman defines the state of modern consciousness through a retelling of literary reveries on the site of the street (from Gogol to Joyce) and in so doing he identifies it profoundly as the public realm and site of cultural production for the twentieth century (Berman 1982). By referring to Baudelaire's poem *Loss of a Halo* (1865) he reveals an archetype of modern man crossing Haussman's Boulevards and losing his halo in the 'mire of the macadam'. Likewise, we see the 'shout in the street' of Joyce's character as a profound part of the narrative of complexity and multiplicity of our status as humans. Berman (like Jane Jacobs) bemoans the loss of the street as a site of exchange:

Berman M (1982) *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*

'the eclipse of the problem of modernity in the 1970's meant the destruction of a vital form of public space. It has threatened and hastened the disintegration of our world into an aggregation of private, material and spiritual interest groups far more isolated than we need to be' (Berman *ibid* p 34).

But what if we consider that the 'street' exists as a public realm, but that instead of being physically defined by macadam and kerbstones, it might require revealing

through a design process that understands its constant physical and temporal mutations from site to site, use to use? This is not a street that we might recognise, but defining its physical size and shape allows it to become, in each case and site, a strategy of 'intimate' policy.

Of course, finding or 'revealing' the public realm through design is not the only answer for how the intimate policy maker might work. We can locate and foreground the moments of shared co-existence as public realms, but how might these be managed practically to form a way forward? Sandercock describes '*managing co-existence in shared spaces*' as '*broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings and creating values*' (Sandercock 2000).

Sandercock, L (2000): "*Cities of (in) Difference and the Challenge for Planning.*"

Amin further explores this idea of 'negotiation' as a part of a physical site for urban policy when he examines the issues of multicultural city (Amin 2002). He sees public space alone as a place where social integration cannot happen, because of the way in which spaces are territorialized by minorities, and instead describes the public realm as the 'micro-publics' of schools, corner shops, clubs, post offices, youth centres, child care centres and so forth, where dialogue is compulsory and mediated by everyday habits. Through tasks and routines of exchange, strangeness is accommodated and the act of exchange becomes a mediation or boundary that, as Arendt proposed, separates and gathers us. Again, policy solidified as a specific place and programme rather than an abstracted concept.

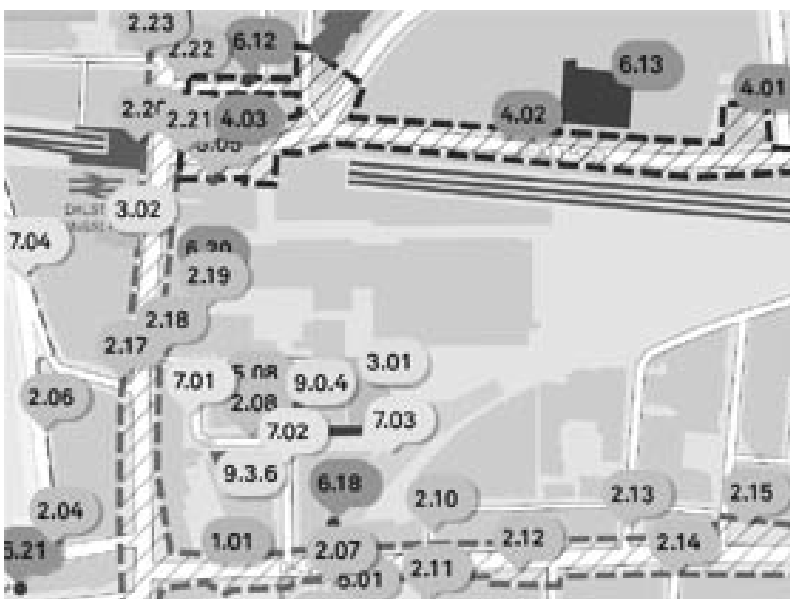
In our practice, rather than being the most obvious public space in a community or site, the public realm (as a piece of physical policy) needs to be found through the process of design encapsulated in the persona of the policy maker. It often finally reveals itself as a much more obscure, attenuated, fragmentary and fragile site and situation. Many projects begin their life through a redrawing of the physical site, as part of the process of discovery. In *What Do You Do And Where Do You Do It?* (Hastings, Australia) the conventionally understood 'site' of a creek as the territory for proposal, became, through processes of uncovering, to be more about a series of fragmentary spaces of children's play and misbehaviour; the map redrawn eventually as a series of actions to foreground the real public realm of the project. In so doing, the drawing of the new site

becomes the solidified policy framework: here less about generic ideas of socializing and leisure, than specific local materialisations to encourage children's illicit games. If the generic policy for the projects is (indirectly) to prevent children's illicit play by clearing up rubbish and presenting a sanitized version of public space, the re-considered policy of intimacy discovers strengths in the occupation by children, that need to be fore-grounded.

The small-scale and the material as a principle for policy making, returns us full circle to answering the questions of multiplicity, complexity and uncertainty. How might we, as architects and city designers, act in a way that accommodates flexibility, multiplicity and uncertainty? In the two most recent projects from muf and muf_aus, one in Melbourne and one in London, some answers are explored in surprisingly similar ways. In both projects urban strategies are presented as a set of fragmentary 'micro-projects', which identify through a close taxonomy of the existing condition, places to act in particularized ways. In *Making Space in Dalston* (2009) the key concern was consideration of how to embrace change whilst nurturing the self-organizing distinctiveness of Dalston, inherent in both its social capital and its physical character; thereby avoiding a process of what might be perceived as gradual neighborhood sanitization. To this end, three strands emerged from the engagement process and form the framework for the study: *value what is there; nurture the possible; define the existing*.

Images from Making Space in Dalston, muf (2009) a spatial and cultural strategy for Dalston, London with JL Gibbons, for London Borough of Hackney. On the right an audit of cultural activities through collecting evidence of events, clubs, galleries, theatres and groups. On the left the plan as a series of micro actions.

The site recording identifies over 200 existing arts and cultural venues operating, and takes these as a starting point for interventions and supporting moves. The project comprises a strategic action plan that details 76 micro-





projects; already two of these projects have been initiated, Dalston Mill and the Dalston Barn, both on the same site and both in association with the French Architects EXYST.

Similarly in *What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* (2008-ongoing) we produced an action plan for Kings Creek as a large list identifying 43 micro-projects for action. The actions cover a number of priorities at a diverse range of scales from weed removal, to pathway maintenance, to the formation of new public spaces. Again a key concern was how to nurture the existing qualities of play and unofficial uses, evidenced by our research, whilst allowing an increased sense of safety and security. Environmental actions address maintenance and restoration of the vestigial bush-land; land access actions looking at strategies for negotiation with local landowners regarding access; linkage actions promoting pathways, access points and signage; and place actions provide new infrastructure which relate to existing uses by the local community including outdoor classroom and nature walks, cubby building and play; and sports pursuits. The Action Plan deliberately avoided the detached gaze of the planner, and structured approachable and modest projects. Each one has a separate implementation plan connected to a local stakeholder and volunteer group (for example

Images from Making Space in Dalston, muf (2009) a spatial and cultural strategy for Dalston, London with JL Gibbons, for London Borough of Hackney.


The Dalston Barn (2010) is a collective community space designed and constructed by EXYST, the french art collective, on the site. This project was curated by muf as an intervention suited to the uses of the micro-site suggested in the strategy.



Images from the strategic action plan *What Do You Do and Where Do You Do It?* mu-faus (2010). The micro proposal at Curacoa Drive provides an entry to the Creek, and is shortly to be constructed on site. From left below, a segment of the action plan showing actions as dots; a BBQ of local scouts on site (2011) to discuss the proposals and the construction team.



the Scouts, School, Rotary) with linkages to funding opportunities, so that they can be implemented incrementally, by different parties, instead of relying on a centralised source. The micro-projects exemplify the roles of the *intimate policy maker*; strategy and detail are combined so that the projects materialise a kind of solidified policy. Like micro-democracies, these have ambitions for the scale of the city, but are grounded in the specific of detail and site.



This chapter has attempted to describe a significant urban dilemma: the gap between the abstraction of urban policy and the concrete reality of the city. The claims for the *intimate policy maker* as a persona of practice do not profess to solve this conundrum, but they do intervene in the gap. Of course there are contemporary practitioners who do likewise largely through a consideration of how design can emerge from the 'bottom-up' rather than the 'top-down' as a way to avoid generalisation, abstraction and irrelevance. De Landa (1997) makes an attempt to collect and summarise some of the design practices which have tried to re-orientate a consideration of the city from the bottom-up, and considers that they fall into three categories: the generative, predictive interventions that utilise computing models; the infrastructural intervention of 'loose fit' design allowing adaptation; and finally the democratising interventions of negotiation, DIY and co-design. He sees the role of designer shifting under these new practices, such that: 'the idea of the designer as an omnipotent creator is fading more and more towards a more transparent role', and one that orchestrates an agency of actors. He believes 'designers should act as facilitators for natural or emergent behaviours'

Conclusion

Although these observations by De Landa are useful in drawing out the problem and framing the approaches, they also fail to entirely capture the process of the intimate policy maker as I have tried to define it. By re-situating the designer only as an 'agent' of emergent and bottom-up processes, the models fail to present the creative tension between the divergent scales of strategy versus detail (to use the terminology from muf introduced at the start of the chapter). To use an analogy, Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language* (1977) made a beautiful and subtle reverie on the tangible and everyday formal languages of the city, using his observations to provide a catalogue of how design might emerge from a vernacular of physical places and behaviours within them. The dilemma for Alexander and his followers lies not in the understanding that this is a rich and inspirational territory (it is) but in what to do with it once it has been pinned down. The implication is that the creative authorship of the designer is no longer necessary once the pattern has been established; that the system can be repeated.

This interpretation is problematic not least because, if

taken to its logical conclusion, it leaves the policy maker for the contemporary city without a creative or transformational role. The means by which the *intimate policy maker* works is different. This role acknowledges, as with the role of the artist, the value of physical design in the process of translation and interpretation. Polanyi's (Polanyi 1967) definition of tacit knowledge is useful in this definition of the creative act because he argues we cannot deny our own authorships and reduce ourselves to agents. Polanyi (according to Smith, 2003) believed creative acts and acts of discovery are striated with strong personal feelings, commitments 'informed guesses, hunches and imaginings'. Of course these principles applies to design at all scales, not just that of city design and urban policy. But if we return to the idea of micro projects – of local actions, and strategic intent - what runs through each project is the sense that through the specifics of physicality and detail, we can inform the strategic so that the personal is political. This means that over and beyond the projects own strategic extent, we might come to other understandings, inform other projects that grapple with the public realm; always with the bias of the deeply personal having political resonance elsewhere. Moreover the policy does not only exist as sheets of paper published in a report, but as physical spaces, fragments of detail and diagrams of intent.

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Conclusion

Design is an ongoing activity, and since the method of this PhD has been a reflection on architectural practice through the design of projects, any conclusion on the projects themselves is deliberately left open-ended in this final chapter. This is not an attempt to make a critique or evaluation of the work. It goes without saying that claims made in the course of the text which draw lineages with other creative and cultural practitioners, are made in the spirit of offering intuitions and hunches, rather than formalizing fixed answers. So this conclusion will avoid concluding on the projects, which is after all the role of a critic or outsider. In this spirit, quotes and references from critical reviews are included as captions in the project books, and together with other extracts, passages and notes they allow a more detached reading of the conclusions to be drawn from the outcomes. Most importantly for a body of work which has sought to operate more closely in the realm of the lived, one might argue that the real conclusions might best lie with the locals, residents, users and publics of these projects. A full social analysis of the effects of projects has not been the purpose of this document, and indeed is not the purpose of the design work, except in specific instances. However valuable this might be, it is not the primary condition for producing the work because (for me) architecture does not operate in the realm of cause and definitive effect as a rationale for its production. Rather this PhD has been a process of self-reflection on how the work has been produced in an attempt to offer this up as an accessible domain for others as part of a broader condition of practice.

This document began with a introductory statement about its contribution to the field of knowledge, its form and proposition that now needs to be returned to. Beginning with the most personal ambition for the PhD, I stated that it marked 'the process of making a space for practice within the mode of the practitioner-academic and marked by the profound legacy of practice with muf'. In pragmatic terms this has process has been initiated through the establishment of the affiliated practice muf_aus in 2006, which, through competition, temporary collaboration, and consultancy, has been responsible for three of the projects included and undertaken as part of the PhD (*Well Adjusted House*, *DIY Park* and *What Do You Do And Where Do You Do It*). The role of balancing my practitioner-academic status has been made more challenging alongside my role as

Contribution to Knowledge

Program Director in Architecture at RMIT so that 'making space' has become an increasingly active dilemma. Pursuing a 'live' project model of teaching and learning, in the process facilitating the projects themselves, provides both a conceptual and a pragmatic resolution to some of these issues and contributes to my role as educator. To support this, a new Project Office has been established in RMIT Architecture in 2011 and has evolved directly from considerations on the broader role of the educator for design practice in the public realm.

The contribution to knowledge in the field is provided through a demonstration and explication of an expanded definition of architectural practice, presented through the projects of muf and muf_aus. In particular, and corresponding to the points enumerated in the introduction:

i) _It has been established that collaboration as a creative act is explored and effected in a range of modes in the projects discussed. Intimate collaborations with the everyday, related to the condition of 'becoming local' (pp 27-45) are complemented by dialogical techniques of art practice (pp 42-43) and broader conceptions of shared and situated collaborative learning (p 96). These multiple and complementary trajectories of collaboration have in common an idea of complicity which incorporates a 'double agency' (p 58) or duality, enabling us to act transgressively as architects, beyond the inherent disjunctions of our discipline and beyond the apparent neutrality of our professional role.

ii)_The chapter headings have framed a series of five roles that have been extracted from a reflection on the mode of operating in practice at muf and muf_aus and which reframe ways of operating as an architect; providing a set of possible alter-egos. In support of broader ideas of collaboration and complicity (see points above) these roles provide a deliberate repositioning of creative practice which overlaps the behaviours and actions of the 'lived' more deliberately onto the 'built'.

iii)_ It has been argued that, although these means of operating may appear to foreground a description of the 'agency' of practice (the ephemeral or immaterial exchanges of collaboration), this does not mean a devaluation of the importance of physical and formal objects

and spaces (p 14). In fact it infers and offers a new framework for evaluating creative collaborative techniques, as a combination of both informal and formal outcomes. The text argues that objects and spaces are critical parts of collaborative practice because they allow concrete creative sharing with the public (p 89); that they are integral to dialogical art practice (p115-123); and that they are transitional phenomena effecting connectivity and exchange with others (pp 35-36).

iv_ In further elucidation of this framework for evaluating creative collaborative techniques in architectural practice (see Point iii above), the notion of expanded design becomes more than just alternate ways of operating. It becomes a definition of how the objects and spaces of design also have the agency of collaboration (connectivity, complicity, communication) embedded within their physicality (see pp15, 35-36, 68).

Making a reflection on the multiple authorships, and personas, contained within this model of practice, as a positive interpretation of authorial uncertainty, has provided the framework by which to move into the next phase; to be both ambitious for a greater scale of operation (both through collaboration with others and expansion of the practice), but also simultaneously more appreciative of the modesty with which some of the projects have progressed and materialized.

Moving from the personal, to the propositional, I also began by stating that the proposition of the PhD (and the projects) was to ask how architecture might occupy the gap between the lived and the built. In different ways, I argue that the roles or persona described in Chapters 1-5 present mechanisms that have sought to breach the boundary of the built and allow the lived to intrude.

Beginning with the most personal, the role of the local enters into the realm of the lived completely, at least temporarily. Being *The Local* has provided projects with a means by which to perceive and value the most mundane and ordinary aspects of our environments, approaching them from a position of humility. Understanding the value of being a local lies in the way it ironically provides more precision, accuracy and expertise about a place than

Proposition

more conventional notions of architectural expertise can. Designing that evolves from this role however is not prescribed by modesty or humility, rather it has the ability to uncover quite radical repositioning of the project and brief to produce often provocative proposals. The role operates like an insider, and (like the double agent) it can allow strategies of resistance and complicity to materialize in design behaviors and in the final physical objects. The role of the local in particular has allowed an opportunity to explore the rich relationship between the child and the urban environment, because, of all locals, children offer us an alternate view - from the eye-level of the child - which provides a recalibration of the normative or parochial aspects of the everyday into a more creative endeavor.

The Double Agent moves between the two positions of the lived and the built, assuming the mantle of either complicity; the insider, like a local (activist or agent) or alternately the outsider with expertise to innovate (entrepreneur, developer). By operating between both poles, the role has the capacity to undermine the distance between the two, providing both our-selves as practitioners, and others with the facility to see beyond the simplistic the either/ or towards a condition of both/and. In this sense it can be argued that of all the roles the double agent conflates the two positions of lived and built and offers a model for practice that moves beyond this limiting binary.

The Artist in the same way as double agent inhabits both realms at alternate moments of project, capable of engaging using relational techniques of dialogue so as to become local, whilst at other times operating with true autonomy in the act of creative production (and occupying the realm of the expert. Put another way

Bourriaud N (2006) *Relational aesthetics*

'The role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real' (Bourriaud 2006)

The contemporary dilemma for creative practices (of which architecture is a prime but rarely cited example) is of operating within the seemingly contradictory realms of social reality and ethics (relational practices) versus creative autonomy (traditional art as object) and the artist role provides a means to see both these operations at play.

The Educator is a role that spans right across the divide by relinquishing straightforward hierarchy entirely, in pursuit of a more open-ended and slippery model of expertise that operates across the territory. The educator as a role understands designing as a process through which all constituencies in a project can become both teachers and learners, from the architect, resident, student, to the child age five. Rather than all being equal however, the levels of knowledge (both tacit and learnt) mutate according to specific situations and circumstances and are in constant flux. The Educator therefore attempts to reframe participation as collaboration.

Finally, the *Policy-maker* inhabits a point 'between' the realms of the lived and the built capable of drawing on both as integral parts of knowledge. For the policy maker it is important to see the abstractions of urban policy (the built) and the concrete reality of the city (the lived) as domains which have concurrent value and which are to be negotiated within the project.

The categorization of persona used within the document, to illustrate the way in which the roles intrude on the realms of the lived and the built, is of course a simplification of the way in which these behaviours place us in alternate positions as architects. But nevertheless, its useful to conceive them as *operational* roles that either provide connective *bridges, swaps, breaches, negotiations, exchanges* and *conditions of simultaneity* between the realms of the lived and the built; all as mechanisms which can conflate what are otherwise considered as separated conditions. But perhaps what is most critical at this point is to reorientate the discussion away from a diagrammatic conception of this binary condition of lived and built, moving it towards a more radical repositioning of the proposition. In fact perhaps we need to stop seeing the lived and the built as separate sides of a divide altogether. To consider this we need to return to the problems broached in the chapter *The Double Agent* in which, typically space is conceptualized as the binary opposite of time, where the temporal is seen as active, heterogenous and mobile, and the spatial is conversely static and closed (Massey 2005). Perhaps the delineation of the lived and the built describes our condition as architects in similarly unhelpful ways because it renders the lived as a realm of temporality and mutability

(everyday life) in utter contrast to the built as conversely a place of spatiality and fixity (architecture and building)?

In fact, through the projects described in Books A-D we might propose an alternate view, that the lived is not only a domain of transience and temporality, but also a distinctly physical territory. It has an alternate physicality that we might describe best through examples of diverse objects and detritus of everyday life such as the ground, furniture, signs, rubbish, hoardings, food, toys, mattresses, bicycles and so forth. Where and how do we find this physicality? Children have told us about these alternative materials when asked to reveal what they know about space. The eye level of the child allows a way in which to re-conceive the realm of the lived entirely, to one of objects and things rather than time alone. Similarly, of course, the built is not a domain for space and fixity alone, but rather a territory of mutability and flux. We understand this even more clearly when we admit to the contingency of architecture as a realm of uncertainty, subject to change. Institutions, governments, planning and cities present us with evidence of this everyday in strategies, initiatives and the changing economies of funding ebbs and flows.

We can return here to the points made at the beginning of this conclusion, that the practice infers and offers a new framework for evaluating creative collaborative techniques, as a combination of both informal and formal outcomes. Re-conceiving the lived and the built as both shared physical and temporal realms allows us also to return to the built outcomes of the projects, and to find the rationale for their taxonomy in Books A-D. We can recognize connections between the physicality of the lived (objects of daily life) and the projects produced in practice by muf and muf_au: designed objects that are closer to games, toys, grounds and playful obstructions, than to architecture. Similarly we can recognize that in the temporality of the built (strategies and frameworks) lies the typical muf anti-master plan, intervening in implementation, organization and broader infrastructures of power to succeed as many of our urban strategies do. Projects reconnect through a fundamental redefining of architectural roles, which have the effect of intervening beyond conventional boundaries. The scale of the projects: very small and very large, are crucial to this ambition, calibrated because of

this to operate differently.

The practice becomes a mirror image of conventionally defined modes of operation, opening up beyond the binary to form a matrix – an expanded field of the lived and the built.

